Entertainment / A2-1

Designer hosts TV show with Vicki Belo but has lipo with another doc

■ World / A10

Michael Jackson fondled me, says trial witness

■ News / A2

Asean bloc to tackle issue against Burma

■ Sports / A31

Angelo Que makes Asian Team in golf duel with Japan

Tanong ng Bayan / A22

Pabor ba kayo sa 4-day workweek?

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35,000 stories on the Net 24 hours after Pope's death

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NEW YORK—The Pope is a newsmaker—dead or alive.

Major news media around the world devoted 10 times as many stories to Pope John Paul II's death as they did to the

35,000/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

AFP admits Church, media groups on its CD 'enemy' list

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

IT'S TRUE: the Armed Forces has a document titled "Knowing Your Enemy" that links certain organizations to the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army.

And it is up to these organizations, which

AFP ADMITS/ A7

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, April 6, 2005 ★★ 70 pages / 7 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 117 P18
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All roads lead to Rome

Expected crowd biggest ever in Vatican history

VATICAN CITY—Just as in life he was always in the public gaze, so in death Pope John Paul II lay exposed to the world and all of the world seemed to be coming to him to pay their last respects.

The Polish Pontiff's body lay in state in St. Peter's Basilica on Tuesday, drawing a sea of faithful to his side as the Roman Catholic Church prepared for his funeral on Friday and wondered who might succeed him.

Cardinals decreed that he remain on view for three days and nights until his burial in the crypt of the basilica after a funeral Mass at 10 a.m.

Vatican spokesperson Joaquin Navarro-Valls said Friday's requiem Mass would be celebrated by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Vatican's doctrinal enforcer and a possible successor to John Paul II.

Navarro-Valls said John Paul II's body hadn't been embalmed, but that it had been "prepared" for public viewing.

The funeral is set to draw up to two million mourners, officials said, including kings, queens and heads of state and government in what is expected to be the biggest gathering at the Vatican in its history.

Hundreds of millions more will follow the ceremony on television across the world.

US President George W. Bush will head the delegation from the United States, the White House said. Britain's Prince Charles postponed his wedding for a day in order to attend.

"All roads lead to Rome". (*Omnes viae Romam ducunt*) is an old Roman proverb which means there are many different ways or methods but all will produce the same result. This expression has been in use since the 1100s.

It originated from the fact that during the Roman Empire, there was an excellent road system that no matter where one came from

ALL ROADS/ A5

APPLAUSE, GRIEF, AWE: Mourners pour out their emotions as they view the body of Pope John Paul II inside St. Peter's Basilica. They also speak of feeling hope and a sense of history. REUTERS

Rome sets up defense shield, no fly zone

ROME—Gearing up for the arrival of more pilgrims and presidents than at any time in its history for Pope John Paul's funeral, Rome is erecting a defense shield that will include a no-fly zone and anti-aircraft missiles.

Crowd-control operations are already well under way on the ground, with the city offering tents and campgrounds for hundreds of thousands of faithful pouring in without lodging.

Thousands of police reinforcements are arriving from across Italy, with authorities unsure what to expect. Most forecasts see 2 million faithful arriving, but some say it could be 4 million -- potentially doubling the population of Rome.

"We've got no real forecast [of how many pilgrims are arriving] and we must update the plan depending on the situation," said Guido Bertolaso, coordinating Rome security during the funeral. "There will be critical moments."

The massive influx of pilgrims, many carrying sleeping bags, is a tribute to history's most travelled Pope, who visited 129 countries and territories, from Chile to the steppes of Kazakhstan, preaching

ROME/ A8

Calling all '95 World Youth Day veterans

By Christian V. Esguerra

IT WILL virtually be World Youth Day of 10 years ago all over again.

In January 1995, John Paul II made one of his most momentous foreign trips when he visited the Philippines and drew a crowd of five million people at the closing Mass of the 10th World Youth Day gathering.

On the eve of the Pope's burial on Friday, delegates to that 1995 assembly will try in their own way to bring John Paul II back to life.

Most "veterans" of World

CALLING/ A6

Sin raring to go but needs doctors' OK

By Christian V. Esguerra, and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

THE SPIRIT is willing but it is the doctors who will decide if retired Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin can go to the Vatican to help elect the new pope.

The 76-year-old prelate is eager to leave but is grounded by kidney and heart problems, his private secretary, Fr. Rufino Sescon, said yesterday.

"The cardinal really wants to go and we're still trying to get clearance from his doctors," he told the INQUIRER.

Doctors from the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital and the University of Santo Tomas Hospital are monitoring Sin's condition and will decide within the week if he is fit to fly to the Vatican, Sescon said.

Vatican reports said the conclave of cardinals, which will choose the new pontiff, will likely not be held before Sunday, giving Sin just enough time to make it to Rome in case the doctors give him the go-signal, he said.

By tradition, the conclave is held 15 to 20 days after a pope's funeral.

SIN RARING/ A6

Who's with GMA as she leaves tonight for Vatican

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Nikko Dizon

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo will leave tonight for the Vatican to attend the Friday funeral of Pope John Paul II and will be back on April 9 in time for the celebration of Bataan Day, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Ms Arroyo will be accompanied by an official party of five, whose expenses will be shouldered by Malacañang. Bunye named the five as Georgina de Venecia, wife of Speaker Jose de Venecia, Batangas Rep. Hermilando Mandanas, Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See Leonida Vera, former Ambassador to the Vatican Howard Dee, and former Ambassador to Cambodia Thelmo Cunanan.

On Monday, the President herself named Cunanan's wife, INQUIRER columnist Belinda Olivares-Cunanan, as part of her official party. But Bunye said yesterday Ms Cunanan would be part of the unofficial delegation, who would have to pay for their own airfare and accommodations.

Bunye could not say how many would go with Ms Arroyo in the Philippine Airlines chartered flight scheduled to leave at 11 tonight.

A source said there were roughly 60 names on the guest list for PAL flight PR 001. But another source at the airport said that as of yesterday morning, the names on the list, mostly from the private sector, had numbered 70—down

WHO'S WITH/ A22

'LIKE WALKING INTO HEAVEN' The sweeping majesty of St. Peter's Basilica is a setting fit for the vigil for the 264th successor of the apostle Peter, a man who's being heralded as "Man of the Century," as "John Paul The Great," and a "saint." But to the ordinary men and women whose life he had touched, Pope John Paul II simply "gave people wings to fly." AFP

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorm. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/04/06/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

DANCE LESSONS. Delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union try their hand (and feet) at the Philippine folk dance "tinikling" with the help of the Westin Philippine Plaza dancers during cocktails on Monday at the nearby Coconut Palace. The affair was hosted by Senate President Franklin Drilon, president of the IPU.

Asean bloc to tackle issue against Burma

SOUTHEAST Asian foreign ministers will hammer out a consensus about mounting calls to strip Burma (Myanmar) of its chance to chair Asean in 2006, Foreign Minister Alberto Romulo said yesterday.

"We will have to take it up in one of the meetings," Romulo told reporters. "We go by consensus, so let us hope that there is consensus on the issue."

Romulo is to host his counterparts from Asean members Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Burma, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam in a retreat in Cebu from April 9 to 12.

While there is no set agenda for the retreat, Romulo said any participant may raise a host of issues, including Burma.

There have been mounting calls from politicians in Asean countries Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore to prevent Burma's military rulers from taking over as chair of the regional trade bloc next year due to the dismal human rights record of its military junta.

At least four Asean foreign ministers have indicated they may try and block Burma unless it introduces democratic reforms, officials said Tuesday.

The United States and the European Union have also warned ties with Asean may be frayed and that they may boycott further Asean meetings.

Burma is under increasing pressure to release pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, and take clear steps to democratize. Critics say Burma's poor human rights record and reluctance to reform tarnishes Asean's reputation, and it shouldn't be allowed to become the chair.

If Burma takes over the rotating helm of Asean, it will host the annual meeting of the Southeast Asian leaders in 2006 and the foreign ministers meeting in 2007 as well as a major security forum traditionally attended by its dialogue partners including the EU and the United States.

The Philippines, the next in line after Burma in the alphabetically rotating Asean chairmanship, has not officially endorsed the anti-Yangon move.

But senators are set to file an "urgent resolution" calling for the release of Suu Kyi and for Burma not to be given a chance at the Asean chairmanship.

"We take note of the position of our legislators. So we will certainly represent the voice of our legislators in the (Asean FM's) meeting," Romulo said in response to questions whether the Philippines supported the Malaysian-led move against Burma.

"They are the people's representatives, so I think we have to listen to the position of Congress, or members of legislature," Romulo said.

However, Romulo also told legislators attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) here, that the Philippines believed in "meaningful discussions and constructive dialogue" even without directly mentioning Burma.

A group of legislators from Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have sent formal letters to their foreign ministers, urging that Burma be required to pass "a minimum standard of compliance" to legitimize its Asean chairmanship in 2006. *AFP, AP*

Belgian IPU delegate mugged

DESPITE the tight security provided by 13,000 policemen, a delegate to the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union general assembly fell victim to muggers in Pasay City on Tuesday morning.

Georges Brion, deputy secretary general of the Belgian parliament, left the Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel at 5:45 a.m. to go to church, took a tricycle, and got held up by its driver and an accomplice in a Pasay side street, police said.

A Brazilian delegate, on the other hand, lost his passport but he could not say how, police also said.

The muggers took Brion's cash of P4,000 and $60, and his identification and credit cards. He suffered bruises in the forehead and arms after he resisted his knife-wielding attackers and was treated at the San Juan de Dios Hospital as an outpatient, police said.

Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, who is in charge of security for the IPU, promptly took responsibility for the incident.

"We have to find out first the circumstances in this," Velasco said. "But we are calling on the IPU president to express, to tell them that despite our best efforts, (this happened and) we are sorry for this incident."

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao reiterated police appeals to delegates to inform the security desks at their hotels of their plans should they choose not to avail themselves of police escorts.

Brion had left his hotel without informing the security desk, police said.

Velasco also appealed to whoever took the passport of Brazilian delegate Claudio Cajado Sampaio to return it.

Sampaio told police he had lost his passport, but Velasco said he could not tell them exactly where or how it happened.

"He's good, he's working at the moment," Geert Versnick, another of Belgium's 13 delegates to the six-day IPU convention, told reporters later who were asking after Brion.

Versnick played down the incident, saying it was too minor an incident to change his view of the country and the Filipinos.

"This could happen in every city; it has happened in every conference. If you have congressmen and other people in the city, this kind of incident happens but no real harm was done," he said.

Senate President Franklin Drilon, for his part, sent a message to Brion expressing his regrets over the incident, according to Versnick.

"The police are on top of the situation. The IPU delegates remain secure, given the security arrangements provided by our police force. This was an isolated incident," Drilon said. *TJ Burgonio, Luige A. del Puerto and Fran Katigbak*

Italian lawmakers can't make it back home for funeral

FOUR Italian lawmakers attending the six-day Inter-Parliamentary Union conference in Manila are sad that they won't be around when Pope John Paul II is laid to rest in the Vatican on Friday.

The parliamentarians, part of the original eight-man delegation, won't be flying back to Italy until Friday evening, the last day of the convention.

"We are sorry to be here," said Italian Congressman Flavio Rodeghiero, who learned of the Pope's death from CNN and BBC in his room at the Westin Philippine Plaza hotel in Pasay City. "It's sad that we're not there."

Rodeghiero and his three colleagues thought of cutting short their stay in Manila to catch John Paul II's funeral, but eventually decided to see through the end of the convention.

"We tried to organize to come back but it's not so easy for a lot of reasons . . . because we have to work here [at the IPU] first of all," he said in an interview during debates on the observance of human rights in the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

"We wanted to be there to at least give him thanks," he added, noting that he was a guiding light to Italians, but said that his greatest legacy to humanity was his work of peace among all peoples of the world.

Rodeghiero said he last saw Pope John Paul II when he visited the parliament two years ago.

Italian Speaker Ferdinando Casini, his entourage of 20 staff and journalists, and four other congressmen called off their trip to Manila Monday so they could attend the Pope's funeral.

At the opening of the IPU conference at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Sunday night, Senate President Franklin Drilon requested all the delegates to rise and offer a minute of prayer for Pope.

Rodeghiero and the other delegates had been earlier informed of the Pope's failing health by Italian Ambassador to Manila Umberto Colesanti, but still felt dispirited upon learning of his death on cable TV.

The four went to Mass at the San Agustin church in Intramuros, Manila on Sunday noon to offer prayers for the Pope.

Cops won't let FPJ backers rally at PICC

POLICE will not allow supporters of the late actor and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. to get near the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City where some 1,500 foreign legislators are meeting for the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union general assembly.

Philippine National Police Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco said that unless the demonstrators had a permit to rally, they could not get on the PICC grounds.

"If you have no permit, we will not allow you," Velasco said. "(But) if you conduct the rally in Freedom Park, by all means, we encourage you to go there," he said.

Poe's supporters are poised to stage a rally at the PICC today to protest the recent dismissal by the Presidential Electoral Tribunal of the election protest filed by the late Poe against President Macapagal-Arroyo, and the request of his widow, Susan Roces, to substitute for her husband in the petition.

Velasco said the police would field civil disturbance management (CDM) units in the area. These would be augmented by the Armed Forces of the Philippines' own CDM units if the need arises, he said.

"We are getting information that some [people] will go on with the demonstration, and so we are moving our CDM there tomorrow," Velasco said.

Luige del Puerto

Erap judge warns lawyers

By Nelson F. Flores

SANDIGANBAYAN Justice Teresita de Castro yesterday warned prosecution and defense lawyers involved in the corruption trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada against making statements that demean the administration of justice.

"You should instead contribute to the enhancement of the justice system," De Castro said, reminding both panels about the rules on sub judice, that is, the ban on commenting on cases awaiting judicial consideration.

De Castro, the presiding justice and head of the special division hearing the plunder case against the jailed ex-President, issued the warning in open court after defense lawyer Jose Flaminiano called the court's attention to the alleged misconduct of Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

Flaminiano pointed to a March 29 INQUIRER report in which Villa-Ignacio was quoted as saying that the defense panel was running out of witnesses.

"It appears that they [the defense panel] no longer have any credible witness to present. I won't be surprised if they present a *taho* [soya drink] vendor at the witness stand sooner or later," Villa-Ignacio was further quoted as saying.

Villa-Ignacio had issued the statement after defense lawyers managed to present only one witness during the March 28 hearing.

Flaminiano said that aside from being very embarrassing, Villa-Ignacio's statement placed defense lawyers in a bad light. He said it made the defense lawyers appear to be incompetent.

He clarified, however, that his move was not meant to gag reporters covering the trial.

"We welcome the media coverage. The Court cannot survive behind walls of silence," Flaminiano said.

Villa-Ignacio said that it was not his intention to demean the members of the defense panel, particularly Flaminiano, whom he considered to be a close friend. He said he had made the statements out of exasperation because of the many excuses of the defense panel about their failure to present their witnesses.

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Pagcor denies casino deal with Stanley Ho

By Philip C. Tubeza

NO, STANLEY Ho is not coming to town.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) yesterday denied accusations it was helping Macao casino mogul Ho make a comeback in the country.

Pagcor said its board of directors on March 29 passed a resolution categorically denying that it had any dealings with Ho, adding that it had "no plan" to work with him in operating a casino "or in any related matter."

In a statement, Pagcor said: "This resolution was passed in order to clear the rumor that Pagcor has business relations with Ho and to [ease] the public's anxiety over this issue."

Pagcor issued the statement after Ilocos Rep. Imee Marcos said on March 28 that Ho was "well on his way to gobbling up the lion's share" of casino operations in the country with the reopening of his mothballed $600-million Jumbo Palace Floating Restaurant on Manila Bay in May.

Marcos had also urged Pagcor to disclose its dealings with Ho's alleged associates, Lin Wei Cheng and Cheng Yu-tung, the owners of the new Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila on Pedro Gil Street in Malate.

Pagcor said it had not received any "applications or proposals from Ho" to open gaming establishments in the country. It also said it had "no intention" of setting up a casino in Ho's floating restaurant.

It added that it was "not aware of any plans" regarding Jumbo Palace, whose opening several years ago was fiercely opposed by the Catholic Church and other groups who believed it was going to be converted into a casino.

"(Pagcor) maintains its commitment to the highest principles of professionalism and transparency," the Pagcor statement said.

"Its record-breaking performance year after year since chairman [Efraim] Genuino took over is a clear indication of the soundness of the business decisions and management style implemented by the current Pagcor administration," it said.

Pagcor pointed out that in 2004, it posted a "phenomenal" income of P29.9 billion, the highest in its 22-year history.

The 2004 income beat the previous record of P20.21 billion set in 2002, which had earned for Pagcor the top spot in the Securities and Exchange Commission's list of the most profitable corporations that year.

"This achievement strongly reinforces Pagcor's position as one of the most reliable sources of much-needed revenues for the government," Pagcor said.

Marcos had also called for a congressional investigation into Pagcor's recent signing of 60-40 revenue-sharing deals with a slew of slot machine operators, "in apparent violation of its charter that sets private investors' income to a maximum of only 10 percent."

"These deals will bleed the government of billions at a time when the public is being squeezed for more tax revenues," Marcos said.

"Pagcor has waltzed around the law by [granting] these lease contracts for slot machines which are, for all intents and purposes, sub-franchises. Pagcor has in fact usurped the power of Congress," she said.

ISPs not doing enough to curb child porn, says research center

By Volt Contreras

LOCAL Internet service providers or ISPs can a play a crucial role in curbing child pornography in the Philippines, but they proved "uncooperative" when approached by a research center commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) to write a book on this tech-savvy crime.

"We were so frustrated with ISPs. They were uncooperative and they did not want to talk with us; not a single interview was granted," recalled Dr. Elizabeth Protacio-De Castro of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies of the University of the Philippines.

"What message are they sending us?" De Castro said, adding that the companies could have offered "suggestions" on how law enforcers can trace and apprehend cyber-porn sites that use minors.

The UP professor made the remarks at yesterday's launch of the book "Child Pornography in the Philippines" at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

The affair was graced by Unicef executive director Carol Bellamy and Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman.

De Castro heads the UP-CIDS' Psychological Trauma and Human Rights Program which the Unicef commissioned last year to write the book, the first of its kind in Southeast Asia.

According to the book, there is "extensive evidence that child pornography is occurring in the Philippines as a result of both foreign and domestic perpetrators seeking to exploit poor and vulnerable families and children."

One of its "most worrisome findings" is that the Internet serves as "link between local producers and networks of pornographers operating overseas."

But despite this alarming trend, Arnie Trinidad, the CIDS researcher who authored the book, said none of the eight ISP companies he approached between April and September last year granted his request for interviews.

"They either claimed to have no time or that (the subject) is not their purview," he told the INQUIRER.

"They could have given us suggestions on how to (go after) the websites that put out child pornography," said De Castro, who stressed that these companies should be governed by a "self-regulating mechanism" for this purpose.

Both De Castro and Trinidad surmised that the ISPs were reluctant because they were simply "protecting their business."

All speakers during the launch underscored how technology—including digital camera cell phones—had made child porn one of the most elusive criminal operations in the world today.

De Castro said the trade had become so sophisticated that one modus operandi in Metro Manila involved simply sending a nude child's digital photo "via cell phone" to a customer "in exchange for P100 load." It's either the minor herself or a pimp who would take and peddle the photo, she said.

Bellamy said that apart from legislators and law enforcers, the private sector should get more involved in the war against child porn. She made special mention of ISPs as well as travel agencies, the latter in relation to the so-called sex tours.

On Monday, the Unicef official told lawmakers attending the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly in Manila how child trafficking had grown into a global, $10-billion industry, rivaling the trade in illicit drugs and arms.

'Too many holidays'

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment has backed a proposal in Congress to put an end to frequent declarations of public and special non-working holidays.

"The behavior of economic factors must be put to productive use. Too many holidays have a negative net effect on employers and workers alike," Labor Undersecretary of Workers Welfare and Protection Benedicto Ernesto Bitonio Jr. told reporters.

He said the DOLE supports Marikina City Rep. Del de Guzman's proposed resolution calling on the executive branch not to declare any more public holidays apart from the 11 legal holidays and two special non-working days.

The labor official said about a million daily wage earners, or those who earn on a no-work-no-pay basis, would be the most affected by the excess in holidays.

Employers complain that giving extra pay to their workers who go to work on holidays does not necessarily translate to increased productivity, Bitonio explained.

Also, the undersecretary added, some businesses would suffer loss of productivity since they would be paying monthly wage earners even if they do not go to work on the declared public holiday.

De Guzman said that during holidays, employers pay their employees about P5.08 billion a day even if there was no work done.

"The practice of declaring additional non-working holidays contradicts our imperative need as a nation to act faster and work harder in improving our economic situation and negates the value of labor and industry as being an important fabric of nation-building," the lawmaker said.

Declaring an extra holiday, usually Fridays or Mondays when the regular holiday falls on a weekend, originated from President Macapagal-Arroyo's "holiday economics" or "longer weekend" drive to boost domestic tourism.

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Customs misses Q1 target, but not by much

By Leila B. Salaverria

REVENUE collections of the Bureau of Customs for the first quarter of 2005 were below target, but not by much, Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina said yesterday.

Lina did not provide any figures, saying he was leaving it to Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima to make the announcement.

"It's off by 2-3 percent. We meet around 98 percent of the target," he told reporters yesterday.

He said tentative reports of the collections were coming in and these would be sent to the finance department and confirmed by the secretary.

The BOC's first quarter target for this year was P32.587 billion, the lowest quarterly target for 2005.

For the subsequent quarters, the targets are: P39.920 billion, P39.716 billion and P38.962 billion. The collection target for the whole of 2005 is P151.185 billion.

When he was appointed last February, Lina said he wanted to ensure that the bureau would meet its collection target by imposing measures to curb smuggling and enhance efficiency.

Last month, he imposed the 12-hour workday system, increasing the bureau's working hours so more clients could be served and a better business environment created.

Under the system, the BOC would remain open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and throughout the lunch hour. Employees still work eight hours a day, through a system of staggering their working hours.

Meanwhile, the Port of Manila, one of the biggest of the BOC's 15 collection districts, has reported a higher-than-expected collection for the first quarter this year.

POM district collector Ronnie Silvestre said that total collection from January to March 2005 stood at P11.4 billion, 6.5 percent higher than the district's target of P10.7 billion.

He said the collection for March was P4.58 billion, which was also slightly higher than the P4.41 billion target.

Silvestre attributed the increase in collections to the volume of importation of oil and steel, which he said rose by 20 percent compared to the same period last year.

But while he was glad that his district was able to meet the target, Silvestre said he could not entirely rejoice if the BOC's overall collection for the first quarter was in the negative.

"We should be concerned about the whole bureau," he said.

Also yesterday, Lina said the BOC was considering imposing the letter of credit requirement on importers of selected items, even as it waits for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to issue an opinion on the bureau's plan to impose the requirement on all imports.

Lina said the LC requirement would initially be imposed on regulated imports like vegetables, fruits, rice and other perishable goods "within the week."

He said he was only waiting for the go-signal of the bureau's legal department.

Lina earlier wrote to the BSP for its opinion on his proposal to implement the LC system and to check if it would violate certain free-trade rules of the World Trade Organization.

Correction

IN THE ARTICLE "'Lipo' fat can be used to sex up private parts," last April 1 (Page A1), it was misstated that Dr. Ana Marie Kare offers her services for free to the poor. Dr. Kare does offer free cosmetic surgery but only to poor Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel whose faces or bodies are disfigured while in the line of duty.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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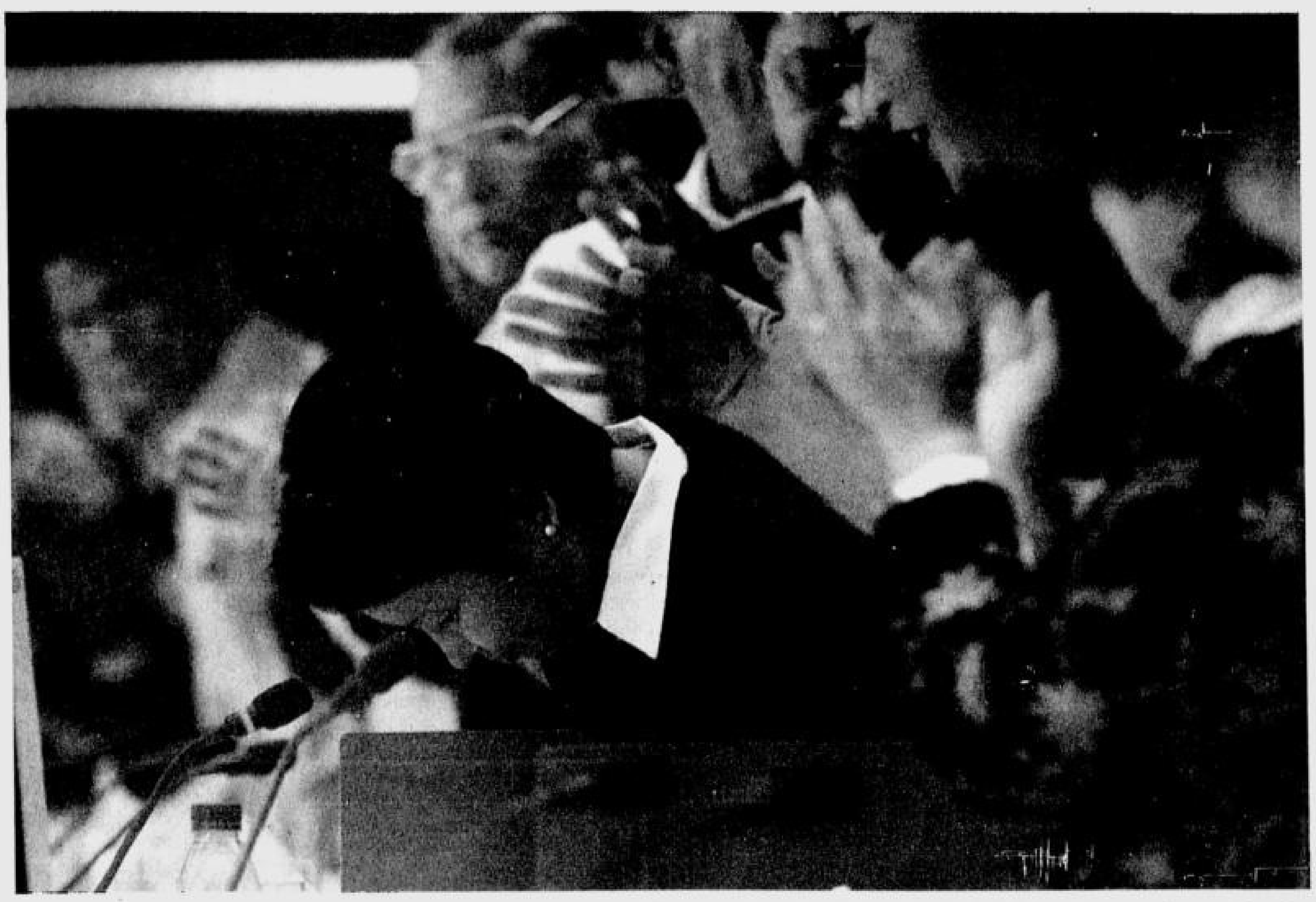

BIRTHDAY WISH. President Macapagal-Arroyo bows her head as Cabinet members sing "Happy Birthday" before the start of a meeting of the National Anti-Poverty Commission in Malacañang. Ms Arroyo celebrated an austere birthday in deference to the worldwide mourning of the death of Pope John Paul II.

EDWIN BACASMAS

No-frills birthday for GMA

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

LUBAO, Pampanga—No musical bands, no streamers or big crowds.

President Macapagal-Arroyo turned 58 yesterday in her hometown without the usual fanfare.

Observing the period of mourning for the death of Pope John Paul II, the President, a devout Catholic, spent her birthday here with a solemn Mass offered for the Pope's eternal repose.

Still and video cameras were banned inside the 400-year-old St. Augustine Church during the Mass, with journalists receiving instructions to observe the solemnity of the rites concelebrated by Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, Los Angeles (United States) Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Solis and five priests.

All the members of the First Family were present, including the President's two granddaughters.

Welcoming Pampanga's favorite daughter were four big wreaths of white orchids adorning the foot of the *retablo* (main altar) and a children's choir singing "Happy Birthday."

"May you renew your commitment of love and service to the Lord and the country," Aniceto told the President.

At the end of the Mass, Ms Arroyo spoke in *Kapampangan* and thanked her *kabalen* (province mates) for giving her the biggest percentage of the total votes she garnered.

Turning to concerns of the day, she urged them for prayers.

"In these times of rising petroleum prices, international terrorism and corruption, [we need] to create six to 10 million jobs ... so we can finally rise from poverty. I ask you all to pray so we can beat the odds and by actively joining [the challenge]," the President said.

Bahrain PM here today

BAHRAIN Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salam Al Khalifa is set to arrive in Manila today for a five-day visit, the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) said.

Al Khalifa and his party will arrive at 4:30 pm at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City via a special flight.

As an official guest of Malacañang, the Miaa said al Khalifa would be accorded planeside honors upon arrival and departure at the Bulwagang Kalayaan at the air base.

However, a source did not reveal the purpose of the prime minister's visit. *Nikko Dizon*

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, April 6, 2005
2nd Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 5:17-26
Gospel: John 3:16-21

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but may have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world; instead, through him the world is to be saved. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned. He who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the Name of the only Son of God.

"This is how the Judgment is made: Light has come into the world and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For whoever does wrong hates the light and doesn't come to the light for fear that his deeds will be shown as evil. But whoever lives according to the truth comes into the light so that it can be clearly seen that his works have been done in God."

Commentary

God so loved the world that he gave his Son so that we might have life and live like Jesus did. Jesus was born among us, lived with us, sought to teach us, convert us and turn our hearts to God alone, as he worshipped God in spirit and truth. We will know this life that Jesus knew with God if we believe and obey his words. Are we the children of darkness or the children of light? Are we the children of the truth or are we those who speak the lies of the world and confuse others' words with the truth? Do our deeds reflect the light and life of Jesus the Crucified One obedient to God or do our deeds do evil, injustice and distort the truth? We will be seen clearly for who we are and what we do. Do we live in the light of resurrection life and the shadow of the cross? Can anyone tell we are the children of God?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (LABOR RELATIONS LAW)—Exercise of management prerogative—The right and privilege of the employer to exercise the so-called management prerogative is recognized, and the courts will not interfere with it. This privilege is inherent in the right of employers to control and manage their enterprise effectively. The right of employees to security of tenure does not give them vested rights to their positions to the extent of depriving management of its prerogative to change their assignments or to transfer them. Managerial prerogatives, however, are subject to limitations provided by law, collective bargaining agreements, and general principles of fair play and justice. The test for determining the validity of the transfer of employees is as follows: It cannot be used as a subterfuge by the employer to rid himself of an undesirable worker. In particular, the employer must be able to show that the transfer is not unreasonable, inconvenient or prejudicial to the employee; nor does it involve a demotion in rank or a diminution of his salaries, privileges and other benefits. Should the employer fail to overcome this burden of proof, the employee's transfer shall be tantamount to constructive dismissal, which has been defined as a quitting because continued employment is rendered impossible, unreasonable or unlikely; as an offer involving a demotion in rank and diminution in pay. Likewise, constructive dismissal exists when an act of clear discrimination, insensibility or disdain by an employer has become so unbearable to the employee leaving him with no option but to forego with his continued employment. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Chico-Nazario, Second Division, Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. vs Gramaje, G. R. No. 156963, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

All roads lead to Rome

From page A1

in Europe, one would end up in Rome, the empire's capital.

Italian media reported that half a million people had queued to see the body laid out before the basilica's main altar since the public viewing began at around 8 p.m. (2 a.m. Tuesday in Manila) on Monday.

"Only faith can move all these people," said Sister Pia, who although she had already seen the Pope's body, decided to join the queue all over again.

Resplendent in crimson and white robes, the Pope left his Apostolic Palace for the last time on Monday, carried aloft on a red velvet litter through the Vatican's frescoed hallways, into a packed St. Peter's Square and onto the vast basilica.

Four Swiss guards in full ceremonial uniform stood at attention around the raised platform where the Pope lay, a silver crucifix tucked under one arm, a rosary in his hands.

Sense of history

Mourners streaming out of St. Peter's Basilica after paying their last respects to the Pope spoke of feeling grief, hope, and a sense of history as they filed past his body.

Most waited for hours, some all day, for a chance to see the Pope lying in state in Christendom's largest church, on the spot from which he had often addressed the faithful.

"Walking toward him in that church, so big, so grandiose, was like walking into heaven toward a saint," said Sister Maximina Semita, a Mexican nun who happened to be on a pilgrimage in Rome when the Pope died. She had waited eight hours.

Black-clad ushers and military officers in crisp blue uniforms motioned the endless queue forward. There was only the sound of shuffling and weeping and, sometimes, the electronic whine of furtive photography.

Videophones

When they reached their turn, many mourners pushed from their minds the surrounding antiquity, pomp and pageantry, and took a last picture of John Paul II with their videophones.

They said even a brief glimpse had been an unforgettable experience.

"It was a unique moment in history. I felt that we were all a family. He was a father to us all," said Isabel Guereiro, a middle-aged Portuguese immigrant living in Rome.

Once it was over, many leaned against the walls of the basilica and sobbed.

Katerina Pestka, a Polish woman working as a domestic in Italy, was red-eyed as she emerged from the basilica.

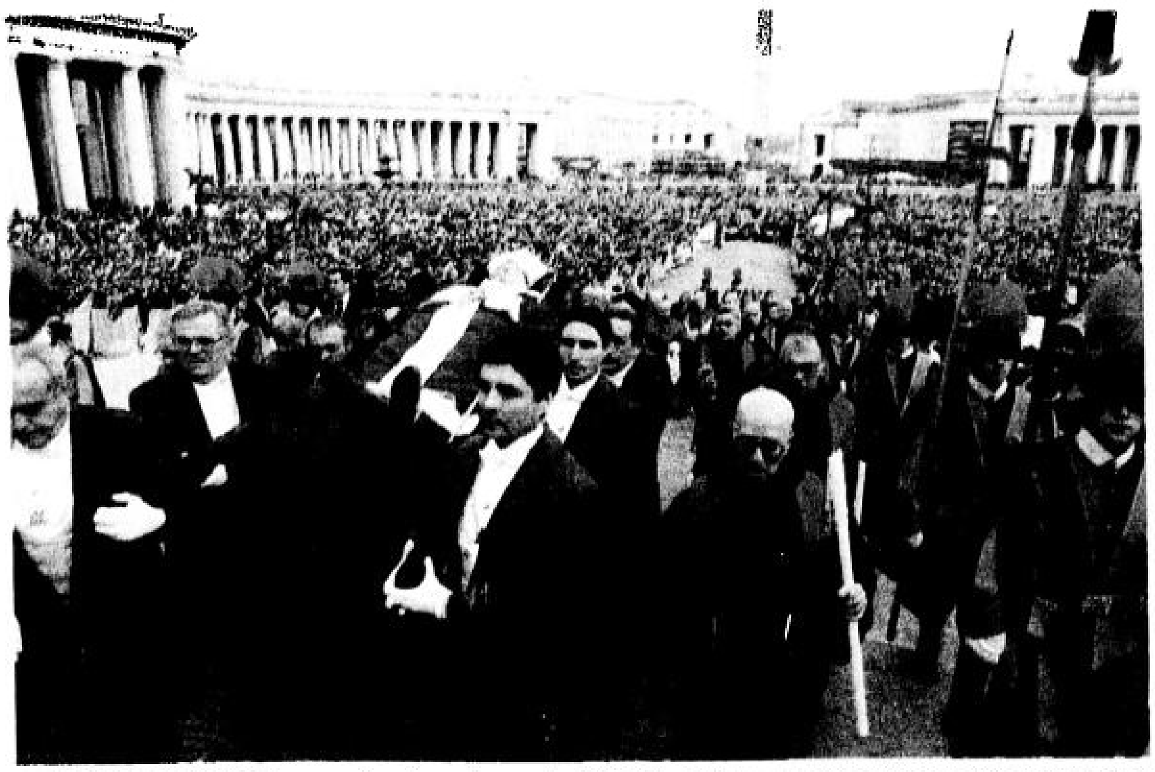
"This is so hard for us, we are devastated. Everyone in Poland is crying, everyone. He was our Pope. I wanted to see him one last time," she said, her voice breaking.

Camping equipment

Many young people, who had rushed straight to the Vatican, filed past the Pope carrying camping equipment.

"I thought of him when he was trying to speak last week. He still had so much to say. It was a shock to see him lying there," said Nicola Imbroglia, a 22-year-old with a ring through his eyebrow and a battered backpack.

Hours before the basilica had opened its doors to the faithful, tens of thousands were already massed between barriers leading out from St. Peter's Square.



AN UNPRECEDENTED procession through a packed St. Peter's Square carries the Pope's body from the Apostolic Palace to St. Peter's Basilica on Monday. The massive throng kept their beloved Pope company in silence.

REUTERS

"All my life he has been with me in my darkest moments. I would wait forever to see him," said Marcella Sogos, 36, who flew in from Sardinia for the occasion with a sleeping bag and enough food to get through the night.

Some people were praying the rosary as they waited, while others passed the time by reading newspapers or watching old footage of the Pope's life on giant screens.

"The Lord will give us strength to wait for as long as it takes," said Sister Lucrezia, a frail-looking elderly nun.

Many carried flowers and pictures of the Pope with messages written on them. Strangers shared candies and memories of the late Pope.

At dawn yesterday, red-eyed pilgrims, many wrapped in blankets, stretched from the basilica down the broad avenue from the Vatican to the river Tiber and crammed side streets.

Crush of mourners

Thousands had joined the line late on Monday and thousands more were arriving on buses and metro trains.

The line itself became something of an attraction, with many Romans strolling along the crash barriers to take pictures of the crowd with the basilica in the background. A group of paramedics climbed a lamppost to get a better view.

Such was the crush of mourners that the giant basilica was closed for little more than an hour to allow cleaning to take place, instead of the three hours which had been scheduled.

Chanting, singing

To break the monotony of the waiting, sections of the crowd spontaneously erupted into chants of "John Paul II, John Paul II," clapping, or singing Christian folk songs.

Many were holding the flags of their countries, while some held posters of a smiling John Paul II.

Bishop John Magee of Cloyne, Ireland, who served as secretary to three popes, including John Paul II, said he thought the massive popular outpouring was the return in kind for the affection the Pope had shown for people the world over.

"I would say he is smiling now and saying: 'Finally they have recognized what I was talking about,'" Magee told Reuters outside the Vatican.

Indefatigable warrior

Three days after the death of the 84-year-old Pole, tributes continued to pour in for the man who had defied dictators, fought for the dispossessed and denounced dissent within his own Church.

Nelson Mandela, former South African president and anti-apartheid icon, said the Pope had offered "moral direction and guidance" in a fast-moving but uncaring world.

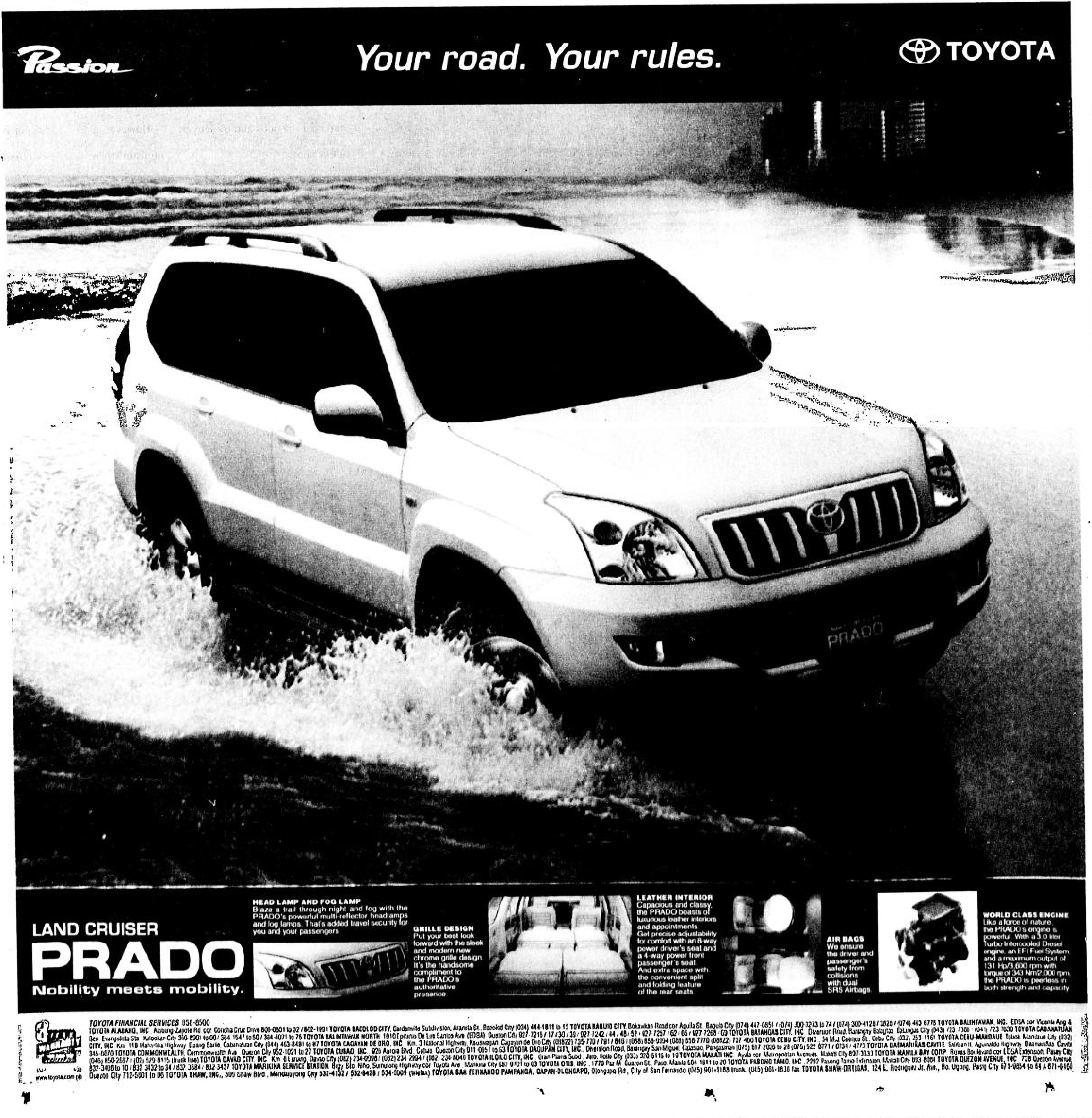
"The world is undoubtedly a better one for the legacy and the teaching he leaves behind," Mandela said in a statement.

Cuban President Fidel Castro wrote in a book of condolences in Havana: "Rest in peace indefatigable warrior for friendship between peoples, enemy of war and friend of the poor."

In the United States, flags flew at half-staff on public buildings, and even the freewheeling Nasdaq stock market in New York held a moment of silence when dealers, who work mainly on computers, were asked not to trade.

Critics in France

But in France, leading French left-wingers sparked a row after criticizing President Jacques Chirac's government for lowering flags on official buildings in tribute to the Pope, which they said breached secular principles. *Reports from AFP, Reuters and AP*



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Sin raring to go but needs doctors' OK

SIN: Doctor's clearance needed

VIDAL: On the road to Rome

SANCHEZ: In Rome but can't vote

From page A1

Doctors are apparently worried that he might not be able to withstand the rigors of a conclave.

No proxies

Vatican rules do not allow any proxy or representative to vote on behalf of an absent cardinal.

Sin, who is undergoing regular dialysis, has been using a wheelchair when he wants to go out for "long walks" for quite sometime now, Sescon said.

In the meantime, he is trying to cope with the passing of a dear friend in Pope John Paul II.

"He's very sad and silent about his friend's death," the priest said. "They were really very close."

Despite his illnesses, Sin stayed up at his Villa San Miguel residence until 5 a.m. last Sunday, monitoring the Pope's deteriorating condition on cable television, Sescon said.

Enduring friendship

He fell silent after the Vatican announced that the 84-year-old Pontiff had died, the priest said.

Sin and John Paul's friendship dated back to the 1978 conclave that elected the Polish cardinal to the papacy.

"Being among the youngest members of the conclave then, they were neighbors in makeshift rooms at the Sistine Chapel," Sescon said. "The better quarters were usually reserved for the older cardinals."

The closeness endured even after the Pope became busy with Vatican affairs and Sin with pressing issues in the Philippines, which was then under the Marcos dictatorship, he said.

Only Filipino electors

"There was a time during the early part of the pontificate when the cardinal traveled to the Vatican six times a year," he said. "That's how close they were."

If Sin gets his medical clearance, he will join Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal in the conclave.

Sin and Vidal are the country's only cardinal electors, or those qualified to participate in the election of the next pope.

A third cardinal, 85-year-old Jose Cardinal Sanchez, is no longer eligible to take part. Electors must be below 80 years old.

Conclave's doorman

For many years after his elevation to the Sacred College of Cardinals at the age of 48, Sin was the youngest of the Church's "princes."

Thus, at the conclaves which elected Pope John Paul I and, months later, Pope John Paul II, he served as doorman, a position traditionally reserved for the youngest of the cardinals, said Sin's biographer, the late professor Felix B. Bautista.

Sin helped lead two bloodless popular revolts that ousted two presidents—the late Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and Joseph Estrada in 2001.

Before Vidal flew to Rome yesterday, some priests told him in a light vein to prepare a new name for himself in case he was elected pope.

'Pope Niño I'

Episcopal vicar Msgr. Esteban Binghay said the priests suggested the name "Pope Niño 1," after Señor Sto. Niño, the patron saint of Cebu.

Vidal, 74, is among the 117 members of the College of Cardinals.

Vidal said he was not interested in becoming pope because he was sickly and already old.

"First of all, I hope I survive the trip because of ... I've just have had my procedure of the heart," Vidal told reporters.

Holy Spirit to decide

Vidal last November underwent an angioplasty, a medical procedure in which a balloon is used to open up narrowed or blocked blood vessels of the heart.

Vidal said he was excited about his trip because it would be his first time to join a conclave.

Asked about the possibility that the new pope could come from the Third World, the prelate replied: "We leave that to the Holy Spirit, we cannot dictate.

"I hope he will follow the same path of John Paul II, especially in matters of preserving the faith of the church, and at the same time, he will give us a true guide in this moment of crisis in the world in the modern times," he said.

Peanut vendors at Vatican

Another priest, Fr. Dan de los Angeles, said he teased Vidal about becoming the next pope.

The cardinal quipped that if it happened, Filipino vendors might go to the Vatican Plaza to sell peanuts.

Calling all '95 World Youth Day veterans

From page A1

Youth Day '95 will return tomorrow to the University of Santo Tomas parade grounds for a prayer vigil to relive their memories of the late Pontiff.

It was on the UST parade grounds where John Paul spoke before delegates to the Youth Day conference, seeking their help in behalf of the Church.

Not only the "veterans" will be there.

Organizer Bishop Rolando Tirona yesterday said the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines was also expecting thousands of youths to turn up at the prayer vigil scheduled from 5 to 9 p.m.

Non-Catholics are also invited.

To be young again

"The youth of the Philippines has a special devotion," Fr. Rufino Sescon of the Archdiocese of Manila's ministry on youth affairs told the INQUIRER.

"The idea is to gather them to reflect on the Pope's message to the young people, basically to recall what he had told them," Sescon said.

Former delegates, most of them now working as professionals, were encouraged to bring souvenirs of the 1995 gathering.

Souvenirs and memories

They were specially urged to bring with them stories of personal encounters with John Paul and of how his message had touched their lives.

"We want them to relive the memory of the Holy Father," Tirona told reporters.

Filipinos had long had a special relationship with John Paul, whose first visit to the country in February 1981 is credited with helping inspire the "People Power" revolution which ousted Ferdinand Marcos 5 years later.

Although he never openly criticized the regime, he made it very clear how he felt during a lavish dinner in Malacanang in which he said human rights violations could never be justified, and called on Filipino leaders to introduce reforms.

The Church's subsequent role in unseating Marcos was crucial. Cardinal Jaime Sin, who was known to have been very close to John Paul, said Monday the Pope had told him that "People Power" was part of the Church's mission. "It was our duty to pursue freedom, restore justice and defend the poor and oppressed," he said.

Organizers of tomorrow's event plan to put up huge screens showing footages of the 1995 assembly.

Songs and dances

Not wanting the occasion to appear like a eulogy, Tirona said the program would include songs and dances, much like what the delegates did 10 years ago.

"We want it to be solemn but at the same time full of hope and life," he said.

Sescon, a 22-year-old seminarian when the Pope visited Manila in 1995, suggested that participants also issue a "pledge to continue committing themselves to the ideals" of John Paul.

"In the end, it is important that they make a commitment to live by the messages of the Holy Father, such as the strengthening of the family, promoting the civilization of life, and living up to the Christian values in the face of materialism and secularism," said the priest.

That time, the Pope told the delegates what the Church was looking for among the Filipino youth.

Paths to unhappiness

It was "help in saving your own generation from the futility, frustration and emptiness in which so many of your contemporaries find themselves," the Pope said then.

John Paul lamented that the young—the "strength, the hope and even the conscience" of society—"are caught in a web of uncertainty, or are desperately seeking happiness along paths that cannot lead to happiness." *With AFP*

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AFP admits there is 'enemy' list

From page A1

include Church and media groups, to prove that they do not deal with communist rebels, according to Brig. Gen. Jose Angel Honrado, chief of the AFP's Civil Relations Service.

"If they say they are not being influenced by the CPP-NPA, thank you. We're happy to hear that," Honrado said yesterday in an interview.

Among the 26 organizations named in the document contained in a compact disc are the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), as well as the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ).

Militant organizations and party-list groups under the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) alliance are also among the listed groups suspected of either being communist fronts or dealing with the rebels.

"[The document] does not brand anybody an enemy of the state. [It says] these groups are being influenced by the CPP-NPA, so we have to be aware of them," Honrado said, adding:

"Whether it is true that the CPP-NPA has been successful in influencing them, it's up to them to tell the people."

Earlier, the NUJP and the militant Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya sa Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), which is also among those listed, separately said they had gotten hold of a copy of the CD. They said it was being shown in the countryside.

However, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu had yet to see the 20-minute PowerPoint presentation.

"I have not seen that CD and I have not yet asked the Isafp (Intelligence Services of the AFP) what that is all about," Abu said when interviewed at Fort Bonifacio yesterday.

Media allies

But Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes said journalists were allies, and not enemies, of the government in the campaign against crime and terrorism.

"I will not allow the media to be harassed, threatened or obstructed in the performance of their legitimate duties to inform the public on public affairs," said Reyes, a former AFP chief.

Reyes heads Task Force Newsmen, which was formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the murders that have earned for the Philippines the reputation of being the worst country to practice journalism outside of war-torn Iraq.

"As far as I am concerned, the media are the allies of the government in fighting crime and terrorism. We must get their cooperation instead of obstructing them in the performance of their duties," he said.

Reyes made these remarks in the wake of Ms Arroyo's order for the Philippine National Police to find a speedy solution to the murder of crusading journalist Marlene Esperat, who was shot dead last month in her own home in Sultan Kudarat.

He said the government was bent on solving all the cases involving the killing of journalists, but denied the finding of the International Federation of Journalists and the NUJP in February that a prevailing "culture of violence" was allowing local leaders to kill supposedly erring members of the media.

He also said he ordered an investigation into the supposed harassment of journalists in Bicol after listening to their complaints at a public forum in Legazpi City last week.

Targets for influence

Honrado denied that the document was a "hit list."

"The CD will tell us which organizations are being targeted by the CPP-NPA for influencing. Is it wrong for us to watch over organizations which we think might endanger the security of the country?" he said.

According to Honrado, the CPP-NPA tries to influence Church and media groups because these organizations are "powerful."

"We're also trying to win them over to our side," he said, but claimed he was not sure that the bishops were named in the document.

And even if they were, "they're targets, not enemies," he said. "You can see clergymen in picket lines. They're being targeted for influence."

As for the activist groups listed, Honrado said: "They are the influencing groups. We know they have links with the CPP-NPA ... Let them deny it."

But Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Corpuz disputed Honrado's claim.

"He is twisting their own pronouncements. The title itself, 'Knowing Your Enemy,' is very categorical about what the CD is all about," Corpuz said.

"That means the groups are the target of political killings, harassment and persecution," he said.

So sue us

Militant groups have said the document bolstered their charge that the AFP and paramilitary units were behind the killing of activists. To date, 32 activists have been shot dead and five others have gone missing since the start of the year.

The groups have assailed the government's inaction, stressing that not one assassin had been named or arrested.

But Honrado said: "If they think the CD will show we're the culprits, why don't they [take] us to court?"

He also said the military could not show the CD to reporters.

"It's a strictly informative CD for military purposes. It is shown to organizations helping the AFP. It is not shown to the public in general," he said, adding:

"Why don't they (NUJP and Pamalakaya) show their copy to the media? Why should it come from us?"

Pamalakaya yesterday offered to give the media a copy of the CD.

Failure of intelligence

Two lawmakers from the ruling Lakas decried the tagging of the NUJP and PCIJ as "enemies of the state" and said this was not only a failure of military intelligence but also a waste of funds and resources.

"Targeting legitimate media organizations may be construed as disregard of freedom of the press and expression, which contradicts the government policy of respect for the fourth estate," said Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan, vice chair of the House committee on justice.

Libanan said the military should explain its basis for including media groups in its "Knowing the Enemy" CD.

He said he did not believe that Ms Arroyo would concur with the document because, he pointed out, she had even expressed concern for the rising number of Filipino journalists killed.

"She even warned in her Inter-Parliamentary Union speech that the days of media killers are numbered," he said.

Libanan and Nueva Ecija Rep. Aurelio Umali said the AFP should focus instead on terrorists and crime syndicates, particularly on the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah.

Waste of resources

"[Training] guns [on] legitimate media organizations is clearly an intelligence failure on the part of the military. It's a waste of funds and resources because the terrorists and criminals are our real enemy and we must focus our intelligence operations on them to eliminate their threat," Umali said. *With reports from Norman Bordadora and Philip C. Tubeza*

Garbage litters St. Peter's Square

VATICAN CITY—With thousands of empty plastic bottles, overflowing trash cans and portable toilets, St. Peter's Square and its surroundings began to show serious signs of wear and tear Tuesday as hundreds of thousands thronged the area to view the body of Pope John Paul II.

"It's unbearable," said Francesca Mercuri as she closed down her cafe—open 24 hours a day since the Pope's death—to clean up a little.

"We have to close for hygiene reasons," she said, as thousands stood outside her corner cafe, some 2 km down the line from St. Peter's Basilica.

And it is still early days. Up to 2 million people are expected to arrive in the Italian capital for Friday's funeral.

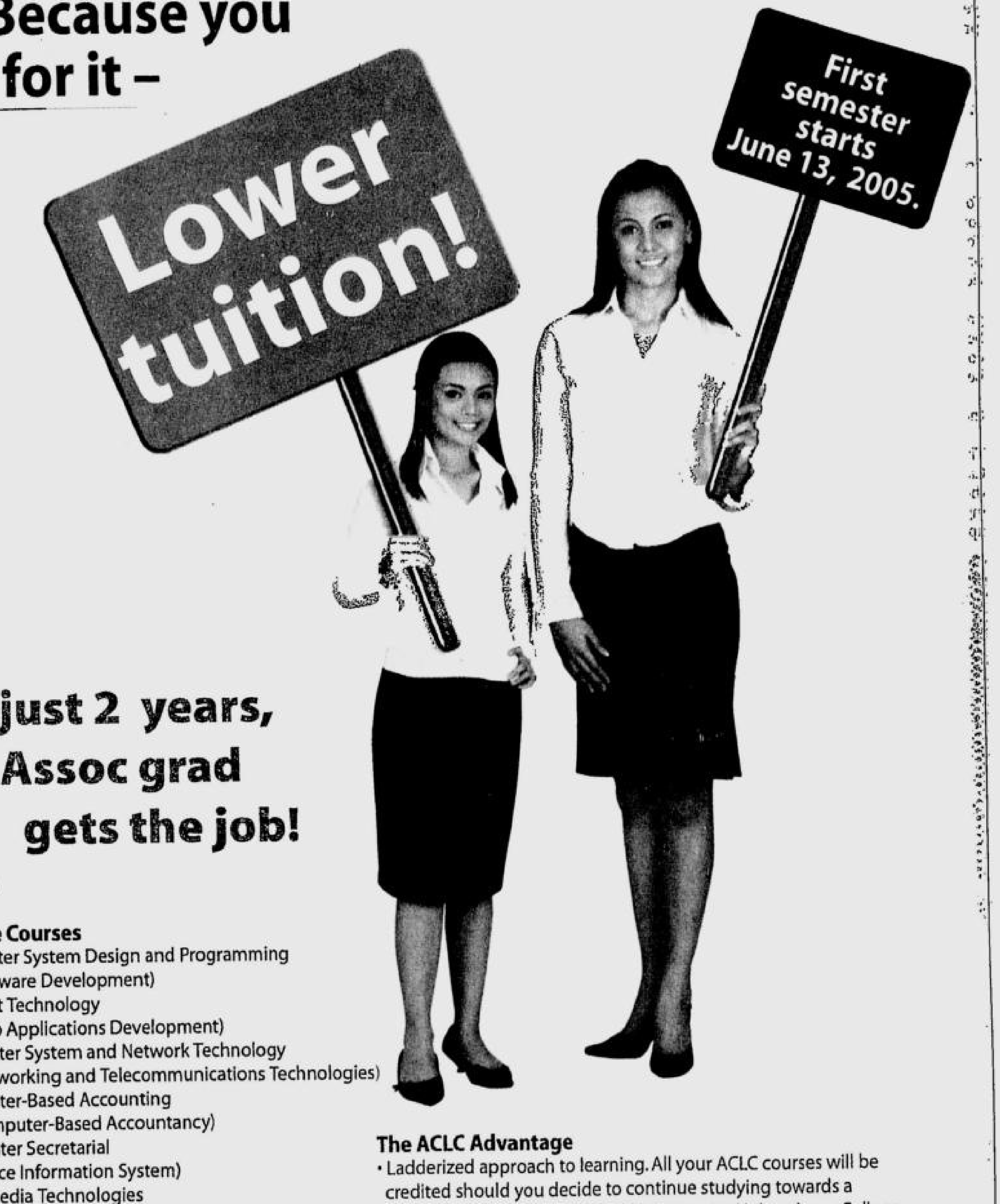
Manuela Reale asked everyone she could find if they knew of a clean toilet in the area.

"I've been looking for ages," said the Roman student.

Street cleaners had clearly not reached the square or its surroundings, where Rome's large green garbage bins overflowed with detritus.

One garbage bag had been left in the basket of a bicycle chained to a lamppost.

By mid-morning city workers began distributing large plastic bags through the crowds in the hope of containing the litter. *AFP*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Mexican says Pope healed dying son

MEXICO CITY—A Mexican man said Pope John Paul II performed a miracle when he cured his terminally ill son during a visit to Mexico in 1990—an event documented by a local diocese.

If confirmed by the Vatican as a miracle, the event could put the late Pontif, on the path to sainthood.

The family met the Pope at the airport in Zacatecas, in northwestern Mexico, in May 1990 thanks to the city's bishop at the time, Javier Lozano Barragan, who is now a cardinal and the Vatican's health minister.

The then 4-year-old Heron Badillo was suffering from leukemia and had been declared terminally ill by doctors, said his father, Felipe de Jesus Badillo.

"But we had the hope that through the Pope's intervention he would be cured," Jesus Badillo told AFP on Monday.

"Little Heron changed after the Pope touched him, kissed his hairless little head, and spoke to him," the father said. "After that he began eating and recovered without medicine. For us it was a miracle," Jesus Badillo said.

Heron Badillo is now 19 and a college student.

Marvelous

Lozano Barragan recalled the story Saturday on Mexican television, describing the event as "marvelous."

He said the family visited the Pope at the Vatican last year and John Paul II remembered their encounter in Zacatecas.

Catholic priest Humberto Salinas, the spokesperson of the Zacatecas diocese, said the diocese was willing to testify on the case.

Salinas said that, according to the diocese, "when the Pope appeared, the boy was cured, and today he is healthy and a student."

"Personally, I believe this was a miracle," the priest added.

The road to sainthood begins with the attribution of one miracle to the candidate, which if confirmed leads to beatification.

It takes another miracle

It takes another miracle to achieve sainthood.

The Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of the Saints normally takes decades to complete the exhaustive inquiries it deems necessary to confirm miracles attributed to potential saints.

But Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, former secretary of the powerful Congregation for Doctrine of the Faith, said in 2003 that what mattered was not whether people had performed miracles, but whether they had displayed "heroic virtue"—led an exemplary life. *AFP*

THREE-NIGHT VIGIL is ongoing at the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran where then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla said Mass during a two-hour stopover in Manila in 1973. *(Story on Page A22.)* JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

'The Great' title bestowed on Pope by popular acclaim

VATICAN CITY—A worldwide movement is building to honor the late Pope John Paul II with a title that has been given only twice and to predecessors who led the Church more than 14 centuries ago and both became saints.

Could he become the third?

That depends on the will of followers and Church leaders rather than any formal process, experts in Vatican law and tradition say.

"It's 'vox populi' (voice of the people) on a grand scale," said the Rev. Robert Taft, a professor of Church history at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. "If people keep calling him 'the Great' then he will become 'the Great.'"

It's being proclaimed by powerful clergymen, printed in newspapers and even tucked into a Vatican-drafted homily: Pope John Paul the Great.

A canon law authority, the Rev. James Conn, noted there was no "code or procedure" to add the title. "It's more of a popular acclamation," said Conn, who teaches at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University. "It gains strength and credibility each time it's proclaimed."

Which is becoming often.

Italian newspapers Monday were filled with the honorific. "The long farewell to John Paul the Great," read the headline in Corriere della Sera. The official Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, called him "John Paul II, the Great."

Catholic-oriented websites were full of references to 'the Great' pope.

"So how would he be remembered? He will be Pope John Paul the Great," said Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Britain following the pontiff's death Saturday.

The text for a Mass on Sunday in St. Peter's Square called the late pope "John Paul the Great." But the reference was dropped by Cardinal Angelo Sodano when he delivered the homily.

Man of the century

No explanation was offered by the Vatican. But Holy See texts are considered official even if not read aloud.

"In short, he was the most significant leader of our times. I'd say he was the man of the century, and at some time in the future he may get another title, 'Pope John Paul the Great,'" said Bishop Edward U. Kmiec of Buffalo, New York.

It would be the first time in many centuries.

The 5th-century Pope Leo I, or Leo the Great, was known for his stirring writings and his unwavering defense of the fundamental theological concept of Christ having two distinct natures, divine and human.

He also persuaded Atilla the Hun to spare Rome and managed to save many Romans from torture and other abuses during a later rampage by Vandals.

The other pope to carry the title, Gregory I, brought a monastic simplicity to the church during his 14-year papacy ending in 604 and used its vast holdings to help starving citizens of Rome during battles with rival states.

He also strongly defended Rome's primacy over the seat of the eastern congregations, Constantinople, now Istanbul, Turkey, and wrote a treatise on pastoral duties that exerted strong influence even into the Middle Ages.

Test of time

Both popes were declared "doctors" of the church—an extremely rare designation to those whose works and actions are considered essential to understanding Christianity and Roman Catholic tenets. John Paul II bestowed it in 1997 on a 19th-century French nun, St. Therese of Lisieux.

Many consider John Paul II's legacy—including his global travels, writings on Church teachings and stands against communism—a modern equivalent to the profound marks left by the early popes.

"Some have already dubbed him 'John Paul the Great,'" Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles said Sunday.

But everyone will be watching to see if it's uttered by the next pope, who will be selected in the cardinals' secret conclave beginning later this month.

"Something like that would take it to another level," said the Rev. Joseph Koterski, a professor of philosophy at Fordham University in New York. "This title comes by acclamation by the Church. People are already using it. It now must stand the test of time." *AP*

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Justice
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
Manila

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. AFF-05-001

RULES GOVERNING THE ISSUANCE OF SPECIAL WORK PERMIT (SWP), PROVISIONAL PERMIT TO WORK (PPW), AND PRE-ARRANGED EMPLOYMENT VISA UNDER SECTION 9(G) OF THE PHILIPPINE IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1940 (PIA), AS AMENDED

WHEREAS, Section 1 of Memorandum Order AFFJr. No. 05-009 dated 09 February 2005 provides for a non-extendible Special Work Permit (SWP) for non-resident aliens;

WHEREAS, Section 2 of the same Memorandum declares that the application for Alien Employment Permit (AEP) shall serve as a Provisional Permit to Work (PPW) while the AEP is being processed;

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the same Memorandum provides for a simplified procedure for the approval and issuance of a pre-arranged employment visa or working visa under Section 9(g) of the PIA, as amended;

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the said Memorandum authorizes the Executive Director of the Bureau of Immigration to formulate the implementing rules and regulations thereof;

WHEREFORE, the following rules are hereby adopted to implement the provisions of Memorandum Order AFFJr. No. 05-009.

Section 1. ***Coverage.*** The following provisions and rules on SWP shall apply to non-resident aliens who will be employed in the Philippines for less than six (6) months and who are not performing artists or journalists. The provisions and rules on PPW shall apply to non-resident aliens who intend to work in the country for a period of more than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year. The provisions and rules on the approval and issuance of 9(g) visa shall apply to all non-resident aliens who intend to work as pre-arranged employees in the country and comply with the requisites stated in Section 20(a) of the Philippine Immigration Act, as amended.

Section 2. ***Validity of the Special Work Permit.*** The maximum period of validity for a SWP is six (6) months. Qualified applicants shall be granted SWP for an initial validity of three (3) months. Those who intend to work for a longer period shall be given a final extension of another (3) months.

Section 3. ***Who may avail of the Provisional Permit to Work. Validity.*** Holders of SWP who intend to work in the country for a longer period than six (6) months shall apply for a PPW with the Bureau of Immigration. Non-holders of SWP who intend to work in the country for a period of more than six months shall likewise apply for a PPW. Applicants for a 9(g) working visa who commence employment while their applications are still pending must secure a PPW.

A PPW shall be valid for a maximum period of one (1) year.

Section 4. ***Alien Employment Permit not a requirement for Provisional Permit to Work.*** An AEP shall not be required for the issuance of a PPW. In lieu thereof, proof of application for an AEP shall suffice.

Section 5. ***Requirements for the 9(g) working visa.*** A working visa application under Section 9(g) of the Philippine Immigration Act shall be accepted upon submission of the minimum requirements, as follows: a) duly accomplished and notarized general application form showing that applicant has no derogatory record with the Bureau; b) petition or application letter signed by the authorized representative of the petitioning company or entity; c) a valid contract of employment and; d) AEP together with the documents submitted to DOLE for the issuance thereof.

All applications shall be subject to the evaluation and verification of the assigned Legal Officer. Additional documents may be required of the applicant if the need therefor arises.

Section 6. ***Validity of the 9(g) working visa.*** An approved application for a 9(g) working visa shall be valid for a period of three (3) years or for a period co-terminus with the AEP issued by the DOLE, whichever is shorter.

Section 7. ***Application fees for 9(g) working visa.*** The fees for applications for conversion of admission status from temporary visitor under Section 9(a) of the Philippine Immigration Act to pre-arranged employment visa under Section 9(g) of the same law shall be as follows: a) the fee for a principal applicant shall be two thousand five hundred pesos (P2,500) multiplied by the number of years that the applicant has been authorized to work in the country as reflected in the AEP and b) the fee for a dependent shall be one thousand five hundred pesos (P1,500) multiplied by the number of years that the principal has been authorized to work in the country.

The fees for applications for extension of 9(g) working visa shall be as follows: a) the fee for a principal applicant shall be one thousand five hundred pesos (P1,500) multiplied by the number of years that the applicant has been authorized to work in the country as reflected in the AEP and b) the fee for a dependent shall be five hundred pesos (P500) multiplied by the number of years that the principal has been authorized to work in the country.

Section 8. ***One-stop Processing Center for 9(g) working visa applications. Duties of the Legal Officers.*** A One-Stop Processing Center under the Office of the Commissioner shall be created to accept and evaluate applications for a 9(g) working visa.

Five (5) Legal Officers shall be designated to process applications for 9(g) working visa. They shall ensure the authenticity of the supporting documents submitted and conduct the necessary verification as may be required by each case.

After conducting the necessary verification, the Legal Officers shall make their recommendations to the Board of Commissioners (BOC). They shall prepare the appropriate agenda showing the name of the applicants and their recommended action for deliberation by the BOC.

Section 9. ***Effectivity.*** This memorandum circular takes effect five (5) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

ALIPIO F. FERNANDEZ, JR.
Commissioner

(PDI – April 6, 2005)

Rome sets up defense shield, no fly zone

From page A1

peace and unity.

World leaders planning to attend the funeral range from US President George W. Bush to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, making the service the most star-studded in Vatican history.

Previous papal funeral

Pope John Paul I's funeral in 1978 was attended by just 105 VIPs, with the US delegation headed by President Jimmy Carter's wife, Rosalynn, instead of the president himself.

To protect the dignitaries, Rome will close its airspace during the funeral.

The air force said it would also ready anti-aircraft missiles and deploy a NATO surveillance plane, drawing from past experience of high-profile state visits.

But past experience will not be enough to cope with unprecedented influx, set to dwarf the 250,000 visitors that filled St. Peter's Square for Mother Teresa's beatification in 2003 -- among the most popular events of John Paul's 26-year pontificate.

Domestic terrorism

The low cost of modern air travel promises to draw still more last-minute pilgrims. Austrian Airlines on Tuesday was offering a special low-fare ticket to Rome, and faithful from the late Pope's native Poland sought charter flights.

The last time a papal funeral was held in the Vatican, domestic terrorism was at its height in Italy.

John Paul II is the first pope to be buried in the modern age of international terrorism, and Rome police are taking few chances.

The Interior Ministry said an additional 6,430 police, including snipers and bomb-disposal experts, had been deployed in the Italian capital.

Armored cars

About 1,500 policemen will be deployed to protect the hundreds of foreign dignitaries expected to attend the funeral.

The Interior Minister said it had enough armored cars to protect those who needed them.

Despite the large number of uniformed police around St. Peter's Square and in the tourist areas of Rome, there was no imposing presence of riot squads or police helicopters overhead.

If snipers were placed on rooftops, they were out of view of the masses in the square.

Although metal detectors are permanently installed around the square and normally used for papal functions, only a few people were scanned with hand-held detectors on Monday.

Throughout the day, much of the square and the wide boulevard leading up to it were blocked off by metal barricades.

Dozens of Carabinieri paramilitary police lingered beyond the fencing where people waited in line to enter the basilica.

Security was stepped up last week after the Pope's health began to deteriorate and pilgrims started to arrive.

Security at the Vatican was tightened only after a Turkish terrorist fired from a crowd in the virtually unguarded St. Peter's Square and wounded John Paul in 1981.

Pope's bodyguards

Measures were further increased sharply following the worldwide terror alert triggered by the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States.

In addition to the Swiss Guards, who guard the basilica in blue-and-yellow striped uniforms and ceremonial weapons, the Vatican security detail numbers some 200 people, including the Pope's bodyguards and special corps from the Italian police.

The Pope's limousine is armored, but cars used by cardinals don't appear to be. *AP*

35,000 stories on the Net 24 hours . . .

From page A1

reelection of President George W. Bush, according to an analysis released Monday.

The Global Language Monitor, which scans the Internet for the use of specific words or phrases using Roman characters, found 35,000 new stories on the pope in the 24 hours after his death Saturday.

Global influence

That compares with about 3,500 new stories on Bush within a day of his reelection and 1,000 new stories on former President Ronald Reagan within a day of his death last year.

The count includes stories at news websites as well as printed stories and transcripts of broadcasts found in electronic repositories such as Lexis-Nexis. About 3,000 newspapers and 1,000 broadcasters around the world were tracked.

Paul J.J. Payack, president of Global Language, said the jump reflected the Roman Catholic pontiff's influence.

"He was tied in history, probably more than any pope in contemporary time," Payack said. "Because of his extensive travels, he's well known in many more countries."

Much to publish

Likewise, US publishers are wasting no time cranking up the presses for new books about the life and legacy of Pope John Paul II, whose own writings have jumped to the top of best-sellers lists in the days since his death.

Just hours after the Pope died on Saturday, News Corp.'s HarperCollins unit and Bertelsmann's Doubleday division announced separate plans for new books about the Pope and his yet-to-be-named successor. Other Pope-related books surely will be on the way, industry experts predicted on Monday.

"I think you will see some quickie books because of the tremendous influence this man had—there is huge interest in his life," said New York literary agent Mort Janklow, whose firm has represented several of the Pope's books in the United States.

Bestsellers

Readers had been snapping up John Paul II's books in recent days. Three of his titles—"Memory and Identity," "Pope John Paul II: In My Own Words" and "The Way to Christ"—were all ranked in Amazon.com's list of the top 10 best-selling books on Monday.

Altogether, six books by or about John Paul were included in Amazon's top 25 best-sellers.

Among the books on the way is a new, yet-to-be-named book from HarperCollins about the end of the Pope's life and the beginning of the next chapter in Vatican history.

The book, to be published later this year, will be written by George Weigel, a theologian who wrote "Witness to Hope: The Biography of John Paul II" in 1999.

Doubleday said it plans to publish two books about the next pope. One will be a collection of the new pope's writings and the other will be a biography and account of the Vatican's pope selection process.

Magnetic personality

The death of other famous figures, such as former US President Ronald Reagan last year and Princess Diana in 1997 also created a whirlwind of action among publishers.

Publishing experts said that now that John Paul had died, they would expect more academic biographies to be published that will take a historical view of his life.

Books of that type could take many years to complete, but they could still be blockbusters because John Paul appeals to such a wide array of people who are interested in his life story, said Lorraine Shanley, a partner at Market Partners International, a publishing consulting firm.

"He straddles a lot of different markets—the Christian market obviously, but he is also of interest for his own magnetic personality," she said. *AP, Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Thais fear new bomb attacks by militants

BANGKOK—Thailand braced for possible new attacks Tuesday in its insurgency-plagued south following two days of bomb blasts and grenade attacks that killed at least two people and wounded dozens.

The grenade assaults Monday in Muslim-dominated Narathiwat province and Sunday's deadly bombings in nearby Songkhla province raised concerns that an Islamic separatist insurgency in the region was gaining momentum.

Security forces have been put on high alert in the region. Overnight in Washington, the US state department warned that escalating, indiscriminate violence in southern Thailand made the area risky for American travelers.

No casualties were reported among the defenders in Monday's assaults in Narathiwat's Joh Irong district, in which the attackers used one or more M-79 grenade launchers, said police Col. Thanongsak Wangsupah. He indicated that authorities had been warned about the attacks.

He said the attackers operated in two groups of about 10 men each, and fled to the forest on a nearby mountain, where they were pursued by security forces.

Earlier Monday, a bomb buried in a road in neighboring Yala province wounded four soldiers.

The attacks came even though security forces were on high alert after two people were killed Sunday night by a bomb at Hat Yai International Airport in Songkhla province.

A department store and a hotel in the province were also bombed, and more than 70 people in all were wounded.

The bombings set off fears that Muslim insurgents who had previously restricted their attacks to the southernmost provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani were broadening their theater of operations.

Since January 2004, almost 800 people have been killed in sectarian violence in the provinces. The Muslim militant suspects have generally restricted their almost daily attacks to hit and run shootings carried out by one or two gunmen and small bombings.

Songkhla is just north of the three Muslim-dominated provinces, and Hat Yai is the biggest city in Thailand's far south. Airports, railway stations and other tourist destinations throughout the south were on full alert after the Songkhla bombings.

Interior Minister Chitchai Wannasathit said authorities have pictures of the attackers at the airport from closed-circuit cameras, but declined to give further details. Military officials have said that the airport bomb was left in a bag by a man in the waiting area.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra condemned the blasts, expressed his condolences to the victims and said security had to be strengthened.

Thaksin has been criticized previously for adopting an iron-fist policy that critics said would only breed more insurgents. However, he has recently called for a more measured approach that would de-emphasize military action.

Southern Thailand's Muslim minority has long complained of discrimination by the central government. Thailand is predominantly Buddhist. *AP*

THAI police officers examine Monday the site where the bomb exploded at Carrefour department store Sunday night in Hat Yai town of Songkhla province, southern Thailand. AP

Reporter recalls light moments with Pope

By Victor L. Simpson

VATICAN CITY—I was on a plane, unshaven, bedraggled, wearing a creased safari jacket still damp from a monsoon in the Seychelles.

So I thought I should apologize to Pope John Paul II before joining him for dinner, duly explaining that these were my "working clothes."

"And these are my working clothes," he responded with a smile, clutching his white robe to make his point.

It was a remarkable moment, a Pope joking and about to sit down to dinner with a journalist, whereas his predecessors had been held in such regal awe they were carried around on portable thrones.

From the Oct. 16, 1978, evening the name of Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was announced as the new Pope, prompting many among the throngs in St. Peter's Square to shout "chi e?" (who?) it was clear this would be a different papacy.

The 50 reporters who traveled with John Paul on his foreign pilgrimages got an especially close—and different—look at the Polish prelate.

We were beside him as he shuffled to the music of African bands in the Congo, as he winced when security guards roughly pushed back adoring faithful on first trip home to Poland, when he was rushed to his plane after scuffles broke out between students in East Timor and Indonesian security forces. He sat with his eyes closed and prayed.

Until his health began declining about a decade ago, he walked up and down the aisles of the plane answering questions in about a half dozen languages, prompting bishops I knew to complain we had better access to him.

His last full-fledged airborne news conference came en route to Havana in 1998.

A year later, flying to India, he came back to greet the press and take one question. He didn't hesitate when asked his opinion of Pope Pius XII at a time when criticism was building over his possible beatification. "He was a great Pope," John Paul said.

Back to that airborne dinner: John Paul was extremely weary after a long pilgrimage to New Zealand and Australia in 1986, but he asked a reporter and the Australian ambassador to the Holy See who was aboard the Qantas jetliner to join him.

He wanted to hear how we thought he did.

He seemed a little short with the ambassador, starting with the choice of wine when the envoy suggested a red and John Paul said he preferred a white, which he sipped at while picking at his lobster salad.

After that it was downhill for the envoy. When he insisted Australians were more English than American in style, John Paul cut him off and snapped: "American."

It was on one of those trips that I learned just how powerful his private secretary, Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, had become. The Pope had dodged a question on a new wave of strikes against the communist government in Poland when turbulence cut off the news conference. *AP*

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Syria starts final phase of withdrawal this week

BEIRUT—Syria's pledge to withdraw all its troops from Lebanon by April 30 and end a 29-year military presence there will meet UN Security Council demands, a UN envoy said as Beirut agreed to allow a UN team to verify the withdrawal of Syrian forces.

Syrian President Bashar Assad told UN envoy Terje Roed-Larsen on Sunday his country's remaining 8,000 soldiers and intelligence agents will all leave Lebanon by the end of the month. Syria's official SANA news agency reported Monday that the final phase of the ongoing withdrawal will begin Thursday.

About 6,000 Syrian troops have already left the country since March.

UN and US demands on Syrian forces to leave Lebanon intensified following the Feb. 14 assassination of former Lebanese Premier Rafik Hariri. In September, Security Council resolution 1559 called for an end to Syrian interference in its smaller neighbor.

Washington demands a full Syrian withdrawal before parliamentary elections, which should be held before the May 31 expiration of the Lebanese legislature's mandate.

Roed-Larsen met with Lebanon President Emile Lahoud, Prime Minister Omar Karami and Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hammoud on Monday, a day after he held talks with Assad in Damascus and secured his promise that Syria's remaining 8,000 soldiers and intelligence agents will leave Lebanon by April 30.

The envoy said he was certain the Security Council "will find satisfactory" the results of his talks with Assad, who had for weeks balked at setting a timetable for the withdrawal.

"I am particularly pleased to announce that... I have received the agreement of the government of Lebanon for the UN to conduct verification of the Syrian withdrawal," Roed-Larsen said after his meetings in Beirut.

Earlier this year, Syria had some 14,000 soldiers in Lebanon, but removed some 6,000 while pulling the rest back into the eastern Bekaa Valley, near the border, during the past month.

On Monday, about 150 Syrian soldiers evacuated three military positions in the southern part of the Bekaa. Trucks carrying equipment, arms and ammunition and towing anti-aircraft guns left Aita al-Foukhar, a village about six miles from the Lebanese-Syrian border, and headed toward Syrian territory, residents said.

Later Monday, two Syrian military radar posts were dismantled and taken away from a hill near the village of Deir Zanoun, about 16 km from the Lebanese-Syrian border, witnesses said on condition of anonymity.

The Syrian news agency said the Syrian and Lebanese army commanders met in Ablah, a Bekaa town where the Lebanese army has a base, and decided to start the final pullout. *AP*

Michael Jackson groped me, tearful man tells jury

SANTA MARIA, California—The son of Michael Jackson's former maid wept Monday as he described during explosive testimony how the star allegedly molested him three times between the ages of seven and 10.

The 24-year-old man choked back tears as he told jurors in Jackson's child sex trial that the "King of Pop" first fondled his genitals more than 15 years ago and again on two later occasions.

"This is so much harder than I thought," he said, dabbing his eyes with a tissue as he recalled the alleged abuse in testimony that legal analysts said amounted to a courtroom bombshell.

"It's embarrassing. It was embarrassing then, and it's embarrassing now," he said as he offered the stunning testimony against the superstar. "This took a lot of counseling," he said, adding that he had to undergo five years of therapy.

Jackson is on trial for allegedly fondling a 13-year-old boy two years ago, but Judge Rodney Melville has allowed the prosecution to present five earlier cases of alleged child abuse by the superstar.

Testimony about the prior cases began Monday, with the former youth pastor saying Jackson fondled him twice through his clothes and once put his hands inside his shorts.

JASON Francia testifies in Jackson's child molestation trial. AFP

The third incident took place when the two were playing video games in the amusement arcade at Jackson's Neverland Ranch, the alleged victim said, adding that he was 10 at the time.

"He reached on my leg, then he reached up to my privates," said the alleged victim, who won an out-of-court settlement worth a reported $2 million from Jackson in 1994 but said he only learned of the deal in 1997.

He said that as Jackson touched his testicles for about two or three minutes, he thought: "I should probably go."

The man said he could hardly bring himself to mention the incident when he was interviewed by police in 1993.

"I tried to block everything out," he said under cross-examination by Jackson's lawyer Thomas Mesereau who pointed out inconsistencies between what the witness told authorities in 1993 and his testimony on Monday.

"I was scared," the young man said. "I didn't want to be embarrassed at school. I didn't want to be embarrassed anywhere, I was 13."

After the first two sexual assaults, both of which took place when the boy was seven or eight years old, Jackson gave him $100-bills, the witness said, adding: "It was kind of don't-tell-your-mum money." *AFP*

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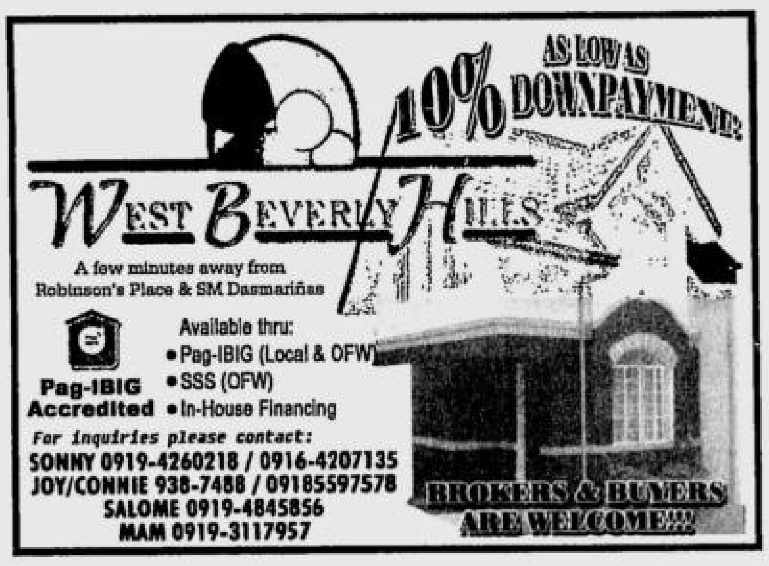

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Bulletin No. 2
Umiray Tunnel and El Niño

Umiray Tunnel

- The tunnel has been cleared of debris and is now supplying water to the Angat reservoir by an average of 500,000 cu.m. per day.
- Access road and Bailey bridge at the tunnel outlet in Macua have been fully restored.
- Intake structures, desilting basins and conveyance channel at the tunnel inlet have been fully restored by the MWSS and its Concessionaires (Manila Water Company and Maynilad Water Services). Total rehabilitation of these will soon start.

El Niño

- According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), the weak El Niño weather condition prevailing in the country is returning to normal condition.
- Normal rainfall condition is expected to start by July 2005, which means the Angat Reservoir in Bulacan will still continue to have reduced water inflow due to lesser rainfall conditions.
- MWSS and its Concessionaires wish to assure their customers of continuous supply of potable water. Actions being undertaken include intensive leak repairs, fast-track water supply projects, backwash water recovery, and pipe network management.

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New bird flu strain found in N. Korea

BEIJING—A strain of bird flu previously undetected in Asia has been found in North Korea, which has culled thousands of chickens to contain the outbreak, a top UN expert said on Tuesday.

The secretive state, struggling with widespread famine after natural disasters and bad harvests in the 1990s, has so far culled 219,000 chickens and clamped down on bird movements.

Hans Wagner, a senior official with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, said Television in Beijing after a week-long visit to North Korea the strain was H7.

"We have a new situation, because H7 has so far not occurred in Asia," he said. "We don't know where the virus came from, so we have to trace back... how did the virus come into the farms," said Wagner, who has played a prominent role in Asia's battle against the deadly H5N1 virus.

H5N1 has killed 49 people since late 2003, 16 since the disease erupted anew in December, and has proved extremely difficult to stamp out in Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia.

North Korea has clamped down on bird movements since the first outbreak was detected on a large poultry farm in Hadang, outside the capital, Pyongyang. Outbreaks were found on two other farms within a 4-km radius of the first case.

It was unclear whether culled chickens were being cooked and eaten. Aid experts say more than 1 million North Koreans have starved to death since the mid 1990s.

There were no indications of human bird flu cases in North Korea, Wagner said. *Reuters*

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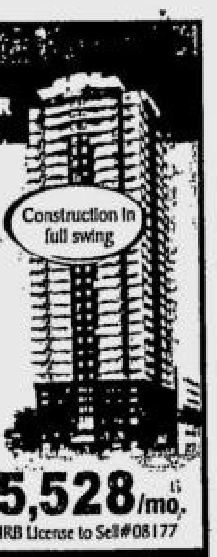
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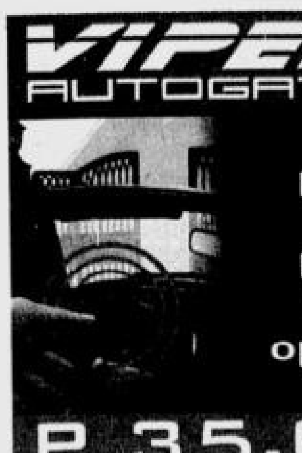
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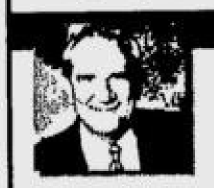
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Marburg virus toll in Angola hits 155

LUANDA—An outbreak of the deadly Ebola-like Marburg virus has intensified in Angola, claiming more than 29 lives over the past four days and taking the nationwide toll to 155, heightening fear of the disease in the capital Luanda, authorities said Monday.

Angolan health minister Sebastiao Veloso said the toll climbed to "175 cases, among them 155 dead, all from the province of Uige," the epicenter of the outbreak in the country's north on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The official toll had stood at 126 on Thursday.

A joint statement by the World Health Organization and the Angolan government meanwhile said 80 percent of the cases involved children under 15.

In Luanda, international experts were working round-the-clock to complete a special isolation ward to treat incoming cases from around the country.

Volunteer workers at Americo Boa Vida hospital, the largest in Angola, are being outfitted with special "Ebola suits" to work as cleaners and washers within the isolation ward, located at the back of the hospital.

"We are late, we must admit it, but we have experienced a lot of resistance from the medical staff, the patients and the inhabitants," said Jacques Mambela-Mbela, the clinical director of Boa Vida, located in the densely populated area of Marcal-Rangel about four km from the city center. *AFP*

2 al-Qaida leaders killed in Saudi

DUBAI—Two suspected leaders of the al-Qaida network in Saudi Arabia have been killed in clashes with security forces that have been raging for two days, Al-Arabiya television reported from the Saudi capital.

Citing Saudi security forces, the Dubai-based station identified the two leaders of the Saudi al-Qaida cell as Saudi national Saud Al-Otaibi and Moroccan Abdel Karim Al-Mojati, who were on the kingdom's list of 26 most-wanted Islamist militants.

The gunbattle began early Sunday when security forces deployed in Al-Rass in the Al-Qassim region, 320 km north of the Saudi capital Riyadh, to track down a group of suspects who had taken refuge in a residential building and then came under fire from automatic weapons.

Eight militants have been killed in the clashes and one surrendered, the television station reported. On Monday the Saudi officials put the toll at seven dead with one militant in hospital in critical condition.

Several members of the Saudi security forces have been injured in the fighting, the interior ministry said Monday.

"The operation is continuing. The security forces have surrounded them. There is still gunfire from the besieged building," interior ministry spokesperson Brig. Mansur al-Turki said Monday.

One witness in Al-Rass said: "Shooting and explosions intensified when night fell (Monday), underlining the ferocity of the clashes."

He said the trapped men seemed to be "looking for a way to break the siege that the security forces have tightened around them after their refusal to surrender."

Residents said security forces deployed in large numbers at the site as helicopters hovered overhead and gunfire and loud blasts were heard. The clash started at around 8 a.m. Sunday.

If the deaths of Otaibi and Mojati are confirmed, only four of Saudi Arabia's 26 most-wanted Islamic militants remain on the run. The others have been killed or arrested.

A campaign of bombings and shootings blamed on al-Qaida has killed 90 civilians in Saudi Arabia since May 2003, according to official figures.

Thirty-nine members of the security forces and 99 militants have also been killed, including the seven in the latest battle according to the official toll.

Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden is Saudi-born and 15 of the 19 hijackers involved in the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States were Saudis.

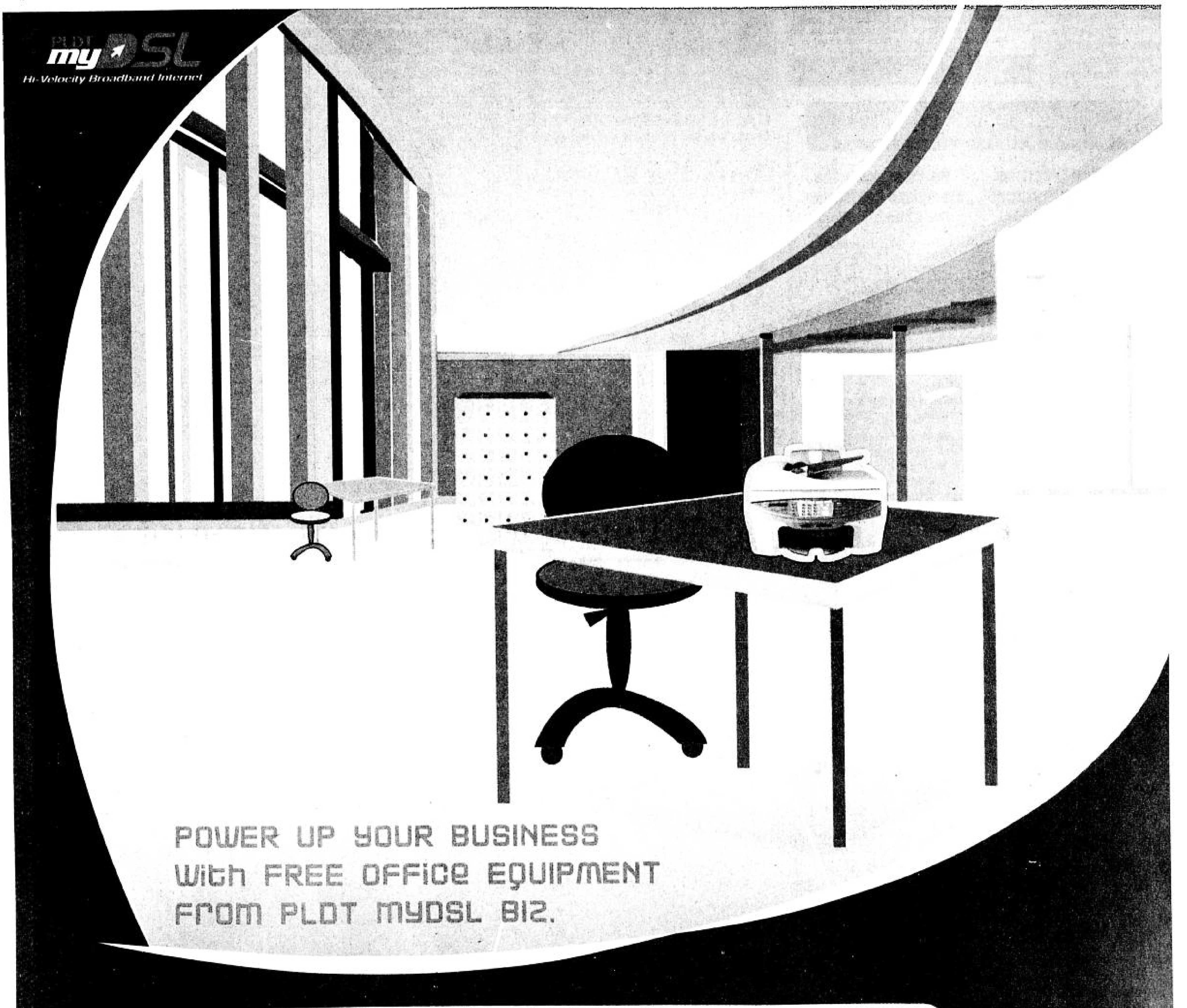
The unrest in the world's top oil exporter has raised fears about the security of the West's supplies but Saudi authorities insist that the oilfields, concentrated in the east of the kingdom, are well protected.

King Fahd on Monday reiterated pledges repeatedly made by Saudi officials to defeat the extremists.

The Saudi government was determined to "eradicate terrorism and fight the deviant group," he told a weekly cabinet session, according to an official statement.

The monarch also hailed the efforts of security forces to fight the militants while minimizing loss of life.

The latest confrontation came less than three weeks after al-Qaida's local chief, Saleh al-Oufi, who at one point was reported dead, resurfaced in recordings attributed to him on an Islamist website to voice support for the network's Iraqi branch and call for attacks on "crusader" targets in the region. *AFP*



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SEARCH FOR LIFE
Astro-biologist Courtney Turich (right) and her assistant Joshua Siefert analyze gas samples from a lake bed at Cuatro Cienagas in Mexico. The ancient coral like formations known as stromatolites first arose on earth more than two billion years ago and researchers believe profiling the gases they emit may enable them to identify life on planets around nearby stars. REUTERS

Sharon, settlers brace for showdown

JERUSALEM—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was preparing for showdown talks with settlers on Monday over his plans to uproot them from the Gaza Strip as his top lieutenants laid the groundwork for next week's summit with US President George W. Bush.

Settler leaders from the Gush Katif settlement bloc in Gaza were poised to ask Sharon for more compensation at a meeting on Tuesday, even though the government has already set aside nearly $1 billion.

A report in the Yediot Aharonot daily said they would demand the package be doubled, in apparent recognition that their fate is sealed.

"It would be irresponsible on our part to be obtuse and disregard reality," said one official, who is due to attend the meeting.

"There is no contradiction between a legitimate civic struggle against disengagement... but we must take into account (the possibility) that the disengagement plan will be implemented," he told the paper.

Sharon, the settlers' one-time champion, has transformed himself into their bete noire by forging ahead with the plan to pull all 8,000 settlers out of Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank by September.

Talks with settler leaders back in October ended badly, with them accusing the premier of dragging the country to civil war, but Tuesday's talks are expected to bring some kind of reconciliation.

Sharon is expected to empathize with the pain of their being evacuated from their homes but appears unlikely to bend to the calls for more compensation, having just won approval for the state budget.

In an apparent olive branch to the settlers, Sharon on Monday appeared to rule out any prospect of uprooting a controversial Jewish enclave in the heart of Hebron in the southern West Bank.

Asked about the future of the enclave, Sharon told a parliamentary committee that it was "a strategic Jewish asset," said sources who attended the session.

Hundreds of soldiers are deployed in the city to protect around 600 settlers who live in the midst of 120,000 Palestinians.

Last year Sharon also managed to gain crucial backing from Bush for Israel to keep control of large West Bank settlement blocs.

The two leaders are expected to meet at Bush's ranch in Texas on April 11, with the pullout topping the agenda.

As part of the preparations for the summit, Sharon's advisor Dov Weisglass has already traveled to Washington and Sharon's number two in government, Shimon Peres, was also heading to the States Monday.

Peres is expected to meet Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to discuss plans to develop relatively sparsely populated areas of Israel in order to re-house those evacuated during the summer.

Meanwhile, Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas on Monday dismissed two more senior security officials in the West Bank in a move aimed at crushing the security chaos in the Palestinian territories, security sources said.

Abbas removed military intelligence chief Gen. Hani Ayyad, relegating him to a position in the interior ministry, as well as the chief of police in Ramallah, Gen. Bilal Abu Zeid, who was replaced by Tayssir Mansur, they said.

The decision was made following an incident last Wednesday when a group of renegade gunmen opened fire inside Abbas' headquarters compound, prompting the Palestinian leader to dismiss a slew of senior security officials. *AFP*

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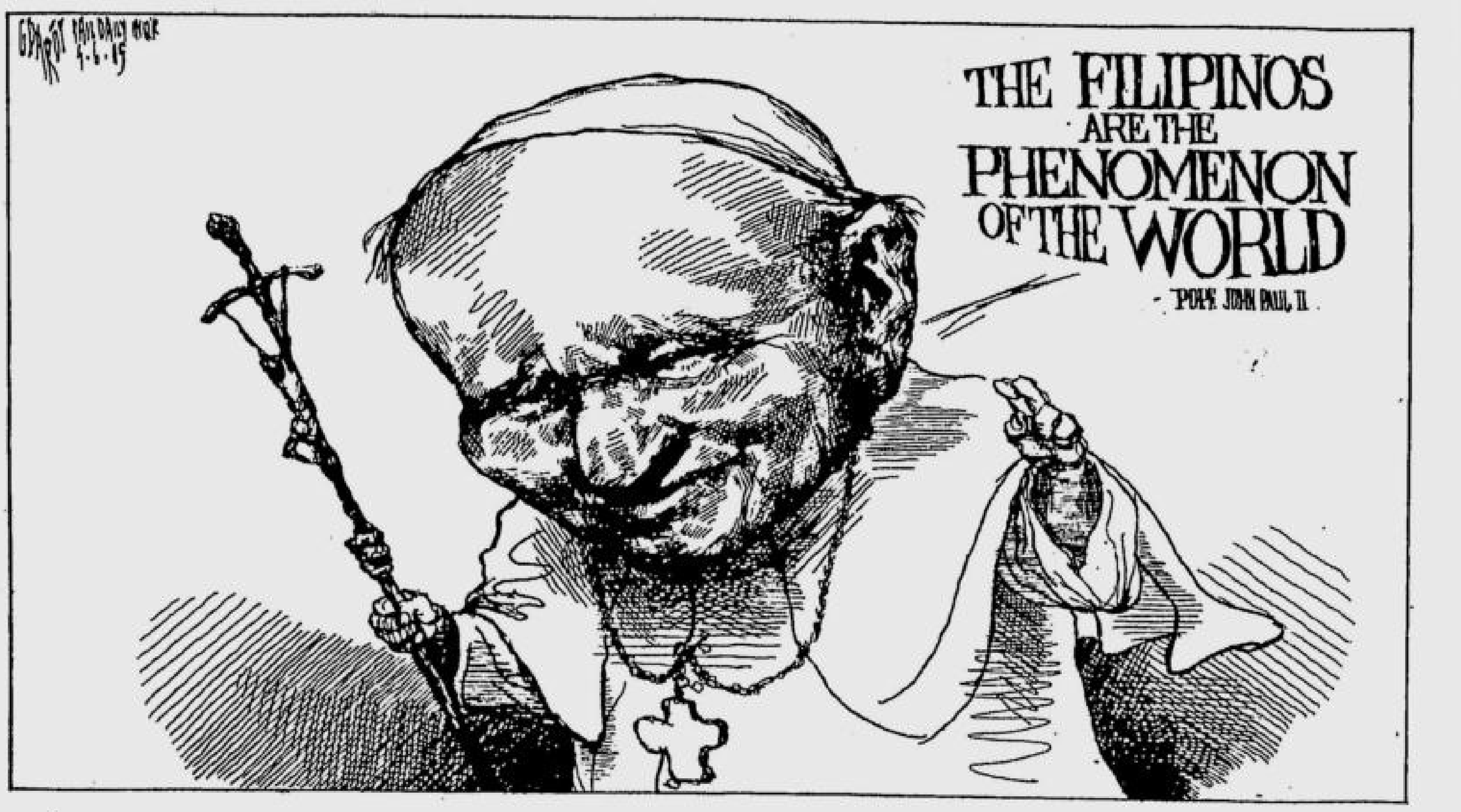

THE FILIPINOS ARE THE PHENOMENON OF THE WORLD
- POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mind games

EDITORIAL

THE HEAVY hand of the United States threatens to intrude into what Filipinos are trying to achieve. On March 30, Adm. William Fallon, head of the US Pacific Command, said that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front had links with the Abu Sayyaf and the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiyah. This statement is nothing new, and is generally accepted as factual by independent observers.

American military statements reflect civilian US policy. Thus, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill expressed similar concerns over the alleged links of the MILF with Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf Group last week, adding, according to some reports, that the US government planned to include the MILF on its list of terror groups. Again, this statement, which is obviously a threat, is nothing new. What should be of concern, however, is the timing of such statements.

On April 16, the government peace panel and the MILF will meet to discuss what Presidential Adviser on Peace Teresita Deles describes as "the core or the substance of the talks: the issue on ancestral domain." Deles says the subject of the discussions indicates how fruitful talks may become.

The American intent is quite obvious, not only to Deles but to all observers. The United States thinks it can help push forward the peace process by brandishing the threat of American sanctions against the MILF. Deles has implicitly recognized this by stating, "Before we resumed the peace process, we asked for the explicit disavowal of the MILF of all links with the organization and the institution with terrorist elements. We believe they have given us that commitment." On the other hand, she has made clear her personal position when it comes to such heavy-handed American attempts to influence events: "Thanks, but no thanks." And she is correct.

The government cannot afford to be seen as acting as America's obliging lapdog, salivating over the prospect of the MILF being intimidated by American pressure. In the first place, such a perception would poison the atmosphere of peace negotiations, turning it from a meeting of the minds to simply another occasion for bullying the Muslims. Second, it could derail such talks because the position of moderate members of the MILF could be jeopardized by antagonizing radicals sympathetic to Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf. The radicals could then make a last-ditch effort to sabotage the talks and permanently place the MILF in a hostile position regarding the government.

Whatever happens, it is the Philippine government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines that will have to bear the brunt of the consequences of American intervention. Short of a massive deployment of American forces, or an equally massive upgrading of the military and leadership capabilities of the AFP with American assistance, it will still be Filipinos pitted against Filipinos. The continuing frosty official American attitude toward the Arroyo administration makes such an investment an unlikely prospect, unless the Americans decide to actively push for regime change in our country.

This means that the United States wants to do something, but will only go so far, as in the end, American strategic and political interests preclude doing anything that would give the administration a major political and military achievement with which to rescue its sagging popularity. This places the United States in the politically perfect, but for Filipinos, intensely malign, position where it serves US interests to sabotage peace talks while reserving the possibility of raising the stakes as far as military intervention is concerned.

With such a damned-if-you-do-and-damned-if-you-don't scenario facing the government, the reluctance of Deles to be dragged into America's mind games is not only understandable but praiseworthy. Thanks, but no thanks, indeed. But much more than this, the responsibility on her shoulders and all those involved with the peace process has become that much greater. They must get it done, with or without, or even despite, American interests.

The same applies to the MILF: It must purge itself of terrorist links and alliances now, lest it reap the whirlwind of American intervention.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

AN ECONOMICS professor of the University of the Philippines, one of the so-called UP 11, did not like the comments I made here last Friday regarding their paper issued just before the opening of the special session of Congress, called to pass the bill increasing the value-added tax. That paper, obviously intended to convince the legislators to okay the tax increase, said the VAT bill is the only way to address the budget deficit. I said no, that can be addressed by increasing tax collection (not necessarily increasing taxes), reducing expenses, or a combination of both. And that the people and the government both should make sacrifices—the people by paying more taxes and the government by reducing expenses—adding that the government should make the bigger sacrifice because it was responsible for bringing us to this predicament in the first place.

I wrote that had the President vetoed the pork-barrel allocations of members of Congress and Congress cut the allowances of all public officials, that would have been an indication that the government was sincere in reducing expenses and the people would not mind paying more taxes. Why did the UP 11 not see this? I asked.

I also wrote that instead of squeezing the common people with more taxes, why not increase instead our maximum corporate income tax which is among the lowest in the world? The salaried worker pays as much in maximum income tax rate as the super rich listed by Forbes Magazine as the richest of the rich in Asia. I also suggested that the giant telecommunications companies, now the biggest earners in the Philippines, surpassing even San Miguel Corp. in income, should be taxed more.

In her own comment, the UP 11 professor called the criticisms "uninformed." She said the "learned" professors did suggest cutting the pork barrel by half. "Good grief!" she said, "There's a whole section in the first paper which makes precisely this point." In other words, the UP 11 did "see" the evil that the pork barrel is, and agrees with us that it should be "halved." (This corner and the people have urged repeatedly that the pork be abolished totally, not just cut in half. While there is still a fraction of the pork remaining, the evil of corruption is still there and it will grow again like cancer cells left behind in the body after an operation.) She added that the "communication skills" of the person who put the paper together "can be considered world class."

There's one problem: It turns out we were talking of two different papers. The critics were talking of the recent Good Friday sermon regarding the passage of the VAT bill; she was referring to another paper issued in August 2004. There was no mention in the recent paper of any comment on the pork barrel in the year-old paper. Good grief! That is "world-class communication skill"?

In journalism, which specializes in communication, it is important that facts reported as recently as yesterday's newspaper be repeated in today's issue as background. This is so because those who read today's newspaper did not necessarily read yesterday's papers, so that background is necessary for readers to fully understand the new story. Although this is clear to freshman journalism students, the "world-class communicator" of the UP 11 did not do this. So that the reporters who reported on the Good Friday sermon of the UP 11 had no inkling of any connection to another paper issued a year ago.

While the new paper repeated the earlier paper's contention that the "financial markets are aching to favor the Philippines," but we are not acting fast enough to "seize the moment," it did not repeat the comments on the pork barrel, admittedly the most wasteful and corrupt provision in the budget. So there was no mention of it at all in the reporters' stories.

But the UP professor harped on this in criticizing their critics. There was no comment on the other points raised by this column, such as the suggestions about increasing the maximum rate of the corporate income tax and increasing taxes on the very profitable telecommunications companies. Instead she turned on other critics for suggesting that the UP 11 is being "used" by the administration by batting for the approval of an increased VAT. I will not comment on that as it does not concern me.

She used up the rest of her comments defending the UP 11's two papers (did she, in fact, write them?). By the way, many of the UP 11 served in different administrations as Cabinet members and economic advisers. Their stints in government are characterized by one common development: the Philippine economy continued to deteriorate. Their economic advocacies coincided with those of the International Monetary Fund and American big business, which is trade liberalization.

This trade liberalization in the Philippines started during the administration of the present President's father, President Diosdado Macapagal. It was Macapagal who abandoned the Filipino First policy of President Carlos P. Garcia, abolished import controls and untied the Philippine peso from the US dollar, the exchange rate of which used to be P2 to $1. The peso continued to slide since then; it is now more than P54 to $1. The Philippines has slid from the status of a "newly developing country" to a Third World country that is among the poorest in the world. All these in spite of, or because of, the economic advocacies of some members of the UP 11 that still try to influence the economic policies of the government. If there is an outstanding example of the saying that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," this is it.

Catholic

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THERE used to be a foreigner who complained regularly, and rather vociferously, in the Letters section of this newspaper about the plague of religion in this country. That was the one thing to blame for this country's ills, he said. Not the least of those ills was a flood of people, which he personally was alarmed at. Common sense said an impoverished country could not afford a huge population, yet Catholicism seemed resolutely opposed to common sense. The Catholic Church's opposition to family planning, he said, was the one biggest obstacle to progress in this country.

I can't say I blame him. The point has been made by other people, not least by Filipinos, in a variety of contexts. Indeed, true enough, if you look at the history of Catholicism in this country (a good time to do so in light of the stocktaking that's happening in Christendom today), you'll see that it has been, to put it charitably, a mixed blessing.

The downside is far more patent than the upside. Catholicism in the first place was a colonial tool, used for pacifying the natives. That was so notwithstanding that the first wave of friars in this country consisted of true missionaries who wished to bring light, as they understood it, to other peoples. The next waves ushered in adventurers and carpetbaggers, the Church in Spain running out of decent volunteers to bring God's work to the ends of the earth. Over time, the friars became more powerful than the governors-general, helped in no small way by the fact that governors-general had short tenures while the heads of religious orders had protracted ones. Rizal's diatribes against the friars hit the nail on the head. They were the real problem; only less so were the civilian authorities who now and then, depending on the political fortunes of the liberals in Spain, showed some progressive tendencies.

It's been said that this country has lived for 300 years in a convent and 50 years in Hollywood, in reference to the Spanish and American occupations. One may, of course, always argue that our sojourn in Hollywood has been considerably longer than 50 years, and that we are still living in it, as witness the way we eagerly patronize the BCR (Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld) production of the action movie called "The War in Iraq." One may further argue that we did live in a convent for 300 years and in Hollywood for more than a hundred, only to get the worst of both worlds.

We're still benumbed by the effects of the convent. What I personally mind is the schizophrenia Catholicism has wrought on our psyche. The fetish for form rather than substance, ritual rather than practice, lip service rather than lifework. That's seen not least in the practice of the friars of old of terrorizing dying landlords to give up their lands to buy a bunk in heaven. A practice that has by no means entirely died: its modern-day equivalent are donations that ease the passage of the donor into the afterlife. You do not have to live a virtuous life to get in the company of John Paul II, you only have to be generous to your favorite parish.

The poor are not entirely devoid of remedy for an ungodly life. They can always go to confession or flagellate themselves on Good Friday to expunge rape and murder. And be free to commit them again afterward in the knowledge instant contrition can always replenish the soul like instant *mami* the body. Form is all, ritual is all, token is all.

We have something like that going on in our midst as we speak, an outpouring of grief at the death of the Pope, church and state officials outdoing themselves to express the greater sense of loss. No one seems to think just living the Pope's teachings, foremost about war and peace, does the trick.

One is tempted to use the word hypocrisy to describe this behavior, but it really goes beyond it. Hypocrisy presumes that the hypocrite knows that he is saying the right thing while doing the wrong thing. Most of us are completely unaware of it. Going to Mass is not unlike getting a license at the LTO. It is not an encouragement to live better lives, any more than a driver's license is an encouragement to drive considerately. It is, as the word "license" suggests, an entitlement to live, or drive, recklessly. But it goes without a thought about the gap between theory and practice, it is assumed to be the natural order of things.

Go through the many things you do in a day, and you'll be astounded to see how much of them yawns with that gap.

Well, this Pope at least has shown the best that Catholicism can be. Though I have to apologize to the women's groups, for truly this Pope too obstructed their cause by adopting the most conservative policies on enlarging the scope of women's rights, particularly on women's priests and divorce. But he has been an awesome force for the good on balance, something both the pious and impious can agree on, who now mourn him with equal passion. He leaves us a special challenge—us being the Filipino Church in particular and the Filipino faithful in general—of examining our consciences to see how far we've really earned the right to call ourselves faithful.

More than any other Pope within our lifetime, he has taught us that being a Catholic is more than praying and fasting, it is doing the right thing in everything we do. More than any other Pope, he has shown us that the spark of the divine is not shown in our fondness of him, it is shown in our kindness to each other. More than any other Pope, he has shown us that being a Catholic is not saying you are one, it is living like one.

Indeed, more than any Pope within our lifetime, he has reminded us of what the word "catholic" means. You can always look that up in the dictionary. But better still, you can look that up in your heart.

The greatest moral leader of our time

COMMENTARY

Francisco S. Tatad

POPE John Paul II was undoubtedly the greatest moral and spiritual leader of our time—one of the greatest in history. He lived the fullness of his life in total surrender and service to God; as he himself wrote after his first pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he "leaves as a witness to offer testimony down through the centuries." What the Church has to say about human life, human dignity, the faith, and man's relationship with God is infinitely clearer to more people today because of this great Pope.

In his 27 years at the papacy, he survived one assassination attempt and produced a large body of work that will be hard to match. He wrote 14 encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 45 apostolic letters, and five books. He beatified 1,338 men and women in 147 beatification rites, and canonized 482 saints in 51 canonization rites. He created 231 cardinals (plus one in pectore) in nine consistories, convened six plenary meetings of the College of Cardinals, and presided at 15 Synod of Bishops. He revised (1983) the Code of Canon Law, untouched since 1917, and released (1992) a new Catechism of the Catholic Church, which updates the Catechism of the Council of Trent issued by order of Pius V in 1566. These are landmark Church documents.

He traveled far and wide and met probably more people than all the 263 other popes before him combined. Whether in Rome, Santiago de Compostela, Czestochowa, Denver, Manila, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Toronto, Mexico, or Havana, he drew infinitely larger crowds than any world leader or rock star of our time. In 1995, Manila gave him the biggest public reception ever assembled on the planet. Since then his face always lit up and his voice showed a little more excitement each time he said "Philippines" or "Filipinos."

At his regular Wednesday appearance at St. Peter's Square alone, the Pope received close to 18 million pilgrims, not counting the 8 million or so he met during the Jubilee Year 2000, and the many millions more on other special occasions. He made 142 trips outside of Italy, 38 official, 104 pastoral; and had 984 encounters with foreign heads of state and heads of government. As Bishop of Rome, he made 146 pastoral visits to various parts of Italy, not counting his visits to nearly all of his 333 parishes.

He brought the message of the gospel to men and women of all faiths, giving a new meaning to inter-religious dialogue and to communion with Rome's separated brethren. He showed the world the real meaning of forgiveness when he visited his failed assassin in jail to bring him his forgiveness, and when he himself asked for forgiveness for the divisions that had wracked the Church and the wrongs suffered by some groups in the past. He thus became even to the Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Orthodox Christians and others, whose prayers accompanied him in his final hours, the quintessential "man of peace."

Serious scholars have since cited John Paul II as the single biggest moral force that brought down the Soviet empire. He did it not by engaging in partisan politics, which he consistently taught should be avoided by priests, but by insisting on the irreducible value of human dignity and human rights.

Some friends and admirers of John Paul II (like George Weigel, Richard John Neuhaus, Michael Novak, Mary Anne Glendon, Mercedes Wilson, Christine Vollmer) may affectionately refer to him ahead of any official pronouncement, as John Paul the Great. My own faith tells me he will one day be listed in the Roman canon of saints, and ultimately proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.

For he served the Church to a heroic degree the way she wants to be served, and taught and preached the truth the way Christ and the Church want the truth to be taught. He spoke of the moral evils of our times, without fear of the consequences. Contraception, abortion, euthanasia, same-sex "marriage," and divorce are wrong not because he was willing to say so; rather, he was more than eager to say so, because they are intrinsically evil, and harmful to the temporal and eternal happiness of man.

Many may reject his teaching, but no one will be able to say he did not put it in the clearest possible terms, leaving no room for any misunderstanding. If the final battle then between good and evil turns out to be between the culture of life and the culture of death, John Paul II would then be proved right as the first prophet who warned us against it.

Yet, the best memories about John Paul II will always belong to the young. He had a special affection for and devotion to them. It is to them he said, quoting our Lord, "Do not be afraid!" Whether at the World Youth Day, the World Meeting of Families, or any other function, they could interrupt his speech anytime with "John Paul II, we love you!" and he would always shout back, "John Paul II loves you too!" Even after his health had begun to fade, and he looked tired and in great discomfort, he always suddenly brightened up and grew younger whenever a toddler was brought in to be kissed and blessed by him.

It was most fitting then that before he said his final Amen, he would direct his last two words to the young assembled at St. Peter's Square, and beyond. "Thank you," he said to the young people who could no longer hear him.

In reality, all of us should be thanking him for giving us a shining example of a great and holy life, lived in love and united to the passion of Christ to the very end. In everything he said and did, he showed all of us, believer and non-believer alike, what it means to be a servant of God, what it means to be a man.

Francisco S. Tatad is a former information minister and senator.

Unicef's message

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

VISITING Manila to address the annual meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is Carol Bellamy, outgoing executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef). Bellamy, who was appointed to Unicef in 1995, has become "a champion of global investment in children," taking it upon herself to challenge leaders, especially government leaders, "to recognize their moral, social and economic responsibility to invest in children—and to shift national resources accordingly."

This was the same message she was going to convey to the world's parliamentarians at the IPU meeting, she said in an interview the day before her address.

Poverty remains the biggest obstacle to the healthy development of the world's children, Bellamy says, citing findings of the "State of the World's Children" report, released last December, that "one of every two children in the world lives in poverty."

But aside from poverty, two other "big issues" affect children in ways beyond conventional reckoning: war and HIV/AIDS.

The failure of governments to address the spread of HIV/AIDS and to curb the proliferation of war, says Bellamy, is the result of "choices made by political leaders." In many ways, she adds, these are "failures of leadership," and parliamentarians "contribute to that leadership."

The role of parliamentarians or legislators in addressing social issues is not confined to legislation, Bellamy points out. "Parliamentarians also have control over the budget, on where investments in human and social development are to be made. Certainly, they can determine if basic health and education, for instance, will receive higher priority in terms of budgeting than defense."

Aside from crafting laws, parliamentarians "are also (public opinion) leaders, they influence the rest of the government and they can influence their own constituents. They need to exercise their leadership in behalf of children."

* * *

THE LINKS between children and HIV/AIDS go beyond the creation of so-called "AIDS orphans," who lose one or both parents to the disease. Although, Bellamy notes, the number of "AIDS orphans" in Sub-Saharan Africa alone now falls between 14 and 15 million.

But children could be affected by HIV/AIDS not just by losing their parents but also by losing other "significant adults" in society, such as teachers and health personnel. They are as well at risk of contracting HIV, either through in vitro infection (when the mother is HIV positive and passes on the virus to the fetus) or through infection from early sexual initiation (possibly through rape or coercion). Then, too, the strains put on a poor country's resources by the rising demand for health services as well as the loss of productive workers can destroy the entire economy, which will in turn impact first and worst on the most vulnerable citizens, the children.

War and conflict, too, result in disaster for children, who are affected by an interlocking factors and causes. "People fail to take into account how wars have changed over the last century," says Bellamy. "The majority of wars are now local, and where before over half of the casualties of war were combatants on both sides, these days the great majority of victims are civilians, most of whom are women and children."

* * *

BELLAMY concedes that the "state of the world's children" has improved considerably in the last 10 years. "More children around the world are healthy today than 10 years ago. More children are in school, and children's rights are better observed, protected and honored."

But while she concedes that "things have gotten better," Bellamy reminds that "there are many things still to be done."

For sure, she says, Unicef remains focused on its main areas of concern: the health, education and protection of the world's children. What may have changed since she took over the helm of this UN agency is "a shift in focus in some countries, as we leave the work of, say, promoting immunization to the government (as in the Philippines) because progress has been made on that front, and move on to champion other issues."

In the Philippines, Unicef is particularly concerned about the issues of child trafficking and child labor, as well as child pornography. In fact, Unicef launched yesterday a book on "Child Pornography in the Philippines" that tracks its definition, origins, proliferation and the challenges before the government, NGOs and the private sector in seeking to eradicate this particularly heinous yet profitable form of child exploitation.

Bellamy was also a guest of honor at the launching of the "Handbook for Parliamentarian on Combating Child Trafficking," a joint project of Unicef and IPU.

* * *

IN THE REMAINING month or so of her tenure as Unicef executive director, Bellamy says she is particularly keen on "strengthening our partnerships" with four very influential sectors: parliamentarians, religious and traditional leaders, sports figures and organizations, and global NGOs.

"The world talks a lot about children," Bellamy observes, but the talk rarely translates into immediate action or even to the allocation of funds needed to better the lives and welfare of the world's children.

If parliamentarians the world over just took the time to listen to Bellamy's message and found it in their hearts, minds and budgets to respond to her call for addressing the major problems confronting children, then perhaps the future will look a lot brighter, and children will truly grow into the adults they are meant to be.

Still about street names

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THE CONTENT of today's column should rightfully be in the Letters section or perhaps the online polls in the Internet edition. There has been so many e-mail responses to the columns on the indiscriminate changing of street names that I have decided to compile them and hope that there will be some lucid legislators who will institute the necessary changes in the Local Government Code and other laws that will make it more difficult to change street names at whim. I cannot accommodate all in this my last column on the subject, but everything received will be used in drafting a set of rules for the National Historical Institute, which is consulted but often unheeded when legislators and local governments want to change the names of streets and public school buildings.

I'm not sure about the age of "Oyie Javelosa, 14," but if he's 14 years old then his comments made me realize there is still hope for this country:

"In the part of your most recent (as to my knowledge) column, entitled 'Against the changing of street names,' where you said, how about renaming generic streets like the North and South Luzon expressways, the Skyway, or C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, and Elliptical Road after someone?' I wish to make a clarification: C5 is no longer officially named C5. You see, our moronic politicians have changed this to President C. P. Garcia Avenue. I learned of this when you leave the South Luzon Expressway through C5. Upon entering C5, I saw a sign stating 'You are now entering Pres. C. P. Garcia Avenue (Formerly C5).' Don't our politicians have something better to do? I mean, they're the ones who keep talking about fiscal crisis, terror threats, political instability and all, but all they do now is keep on changing the names of streets. Instead of wasting their time on things that people don't really appreciate (perhaps those who were related to the person whose name made it to the streets or the person himself), why not do the things they have promised during the election?"

Joselito Y. Gutierrez, an architect, wrote:

"A street along ABS-CBN was renamed Lopez Avenue. It used to be Scout Albano, one of the scouts of the 11th Jamboree who perished in the plane crash in the '50s. The street was named by virtue of a PD. Renaming it to Lopez was done by a QC councilor. Can this be done? Though Mr. Lopez has done a lot for the media and television, what happens to the memory of Scout Albano?"

That question is best left to the person who changed the street name to answer.

Violeta Reyes wrote:

"Your article may well have been entitled 'Aghast at the changing of street names!' because that is exactly how I feel. I am 53 years old now so I have seen more street-name changing than you and I stubbornly use the old names to the confusion of my driver. Buendia, Vito Cruz, etc... I still use them.

"How fortunate for France they do not have government officials like ours. Otherwise the Arc de Triomphe would most probably be Imelda's or Cory's Arch or something! I marvel that other countries maintain the name of their old roads. (Does Damascus still exist?) Oh to bring back Carriedo, Legarda, Dewey Blvd., Murphy, etc.! No, I don't have a colonial mentality. But we had the Spaniards for 300 years and then the Americans for a few more and erasing their names from the roads do not alter anything (bad memories of colonization?!). Geez, let's forge on to improve our lives but let not whence we came from and what we were be erased from our heritage. *'Ang hindi lumingon sa pinanggalingan...'* No wonder we seem to be getting nowhere!"

In a similar vein Cesar Evangelista wrote:

"I am not just against the changing of street names, I am also for the restoration of old or original names to street names like Claro M. Recto back to Azcarraga, UN Avenue to Isaac Peral. Manila is such a historical city that we should restore the old names so we can tour the city with the history books as our guide. Besides, there are always new streets that are built which can accommodate the egos of those who advocate the honoring of historical or prominent persons."

There was also a lot of e-mail from expatriate Filipinos now living in Japan, Canada and the United States. One of them was Ferdinand Viola who wrote:

"Ever since you touched this subject years ago, I always get upset every time I see the new names of the streets when I visit some friends in Manila. I am glad to know that I am not the only one against the renaming of the streets. It would be a pleasure to see the street names Basilio, Sisa, Ibarra, Piy Margall (I do know who he is), etc. in Sampaloc, Manila, where I used to live.

"I hope Congress can enact a law making it very, very difficult to change the name of a street. A law [that says] new street names can only be [given to] newly constructed streets. That way two problems can be solved at the same time. Politicians will be forced to create new streets as they will surely want the name of their clans to be announced to the voters and the other benefit is, traffic will ease."

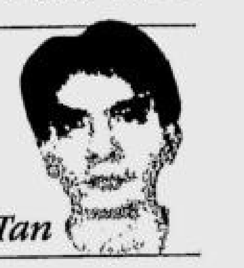
So far nobody has e-mailed in support of the changing of street names. Let's hope its stays that way.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

A man of his times

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

"HE wore laced up shoes rather than dainty white slippers."

I loved the way a woman summed up her impression of the Pope on BBC Radio. Unfortunately, I didn't catch her name, but her point was that Pope John Paul II was a man of the world, a man of the times. The shoe-and-slipper comparison was meant to emphasize how earlier popes, with their "dainty white slippers," kept themselves safely close to home, to the Vatican, while this Pope, made the Catholic Church a moral voice by roaming the world presumably in his leather shoes.

John Paul II's engagement of the world began even before he became pope. In his youth, he was a sportsman who was into skiing, hiking, swimming, mountain climbing. He was an actor, too, and a poet. As bishop, archbishop and cardinal in Poland, he took the communist regime by the horns, demanding more permits to build churches and secretly ordaining priests for Czechoslovakia.

Since we have a majority Catholic population, the Pope's views of the Catholic Church and of the world have left its indelible mark on our life as a nation. Filipinos had a direct glimpse of some of his strongest views during his two papal visits to the Philippines, which were, on one hand, radicalism when it came to issues of social justice and, on the other, doctrinal conservatism on matters of sexuality.

Social radicalism

The Pope was unrelenting in his view that the Catholic Church needed to transcend a corrupted and corrupting world, speaking out against communism and capitalism, against secularism and consumerism (which he once labeled neopaganism), and against the suppression of human rights.

When he visited the Philippines in 1981, we had suffered 16 years of Ferdinand Marcos. The conjugal dictatorship was in its twilight years but attempted to put up one of those grand shows to impress the Pope. Robin Wright, a journalist and writer, described her memories of that visit several years later in a talk to students:

"Two throne-like wooden chairs had been specially carved for the occasion; red cushions were embroidered with the papal and Marcos crests. The palatial setting and the sea of white gowns and lacey shirts were a particularly stark contrast to the tattered poor who had lined the roads to welcome the Pontiff to Manila.

"In front of Marcos' family, friends and more than a thousand members of the cabinet, military and judiciary, as well as millions on live television, John Paul declared, 'Even in exceptional situations, one can never justify any violation of the fundamental dignity of the human person or of the basic rights that safeguard this dignity.'"

Wright notes that the "the papal speech was a wringing and humiliating rebuke of Marcos' dictatorship," one which no other visiting chief of state had ever made. (I can't help but contrast the Pope's remarks with those of another visiting dignitary, US Vice President George Bush, father of the incumbent president, who toasted Marcos in 1985: "We love your adherence to democratic principles.")

Wright says the Pope repeated his messages of social justice wherever he went. In Bacolod, he told 100,000 *sacadas* (sugar cane workers): "The Church will not hesitate to take up the cause of the poor and to become the voice of those who are not listened to when they speak up, not to demand charity, but to ask for justice."

Sexual conservatism

While the Pope has been outspoken on many social and political issues—opposing the nuclear arms race and the death penalty for example and, more recently, protesting against the war in Iraq—his views on sexuality reflected doctrinal conservatism.

This conservatism was prominent when he came back to the Philippines in 1995 to celebrate World Youth Day. He spoke constantly about the sanctity of life, shorthand for opposition to abortion and to contraception. In a speech to Filipino Catholic bishops, he reasserted the Church's stand: "Because the Church treasures the divine gifts of human life and its inalienable dignity, she cannot but strenuously oppose all measures which are in any way directed at promoting abortion, sterilization and also contraception. Your firm stand against the pessimism and selfishness of those who plot against the splendor of human sexuality and human life is an essential demand of your pastoral ministry and of your service to the Filipino people."

This was the other side to the Pope, a deep personal conservatism around gender roles and sexuality. In the name of preserving life and the family, he opposed the ordination of women, gay rights, artificial contraception and the use of condoms to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Liberals have seen inconsistency here: how can one speak of preserving life and yet forbid the use of condoms to prevent a deadly illness like HIV/AIDS? Liberals, too, saw inconsistency between his exhortations for sexual responsibility and the way the Church hierarchy responded to sexual abuse by its clergy by transferring offenders to new parishes and attempting out-of-court financial settlements.

To die as one lives

In seeking to engage the world, John Paul II was actually being shaped by that world. Writing in "Gift and Mystery," he recalled: "The two totalitarian systems which tragically marked our century—Nazism on the one hand, marked by the horrors of war and the concentration camps, and communism on the other, with its regime of oppression and terror—I came to know, so to speak, from within. And so it is easy to understand my deep concern for the dignity of each human person and the need to respect human rights, beginning with the right to life."

The Pope embraced modernity, yet saw it as threatening and sought solutions and refuge in the traditions of the Catholic Church.

However one might disagree with the Pope, it is difficult not to recognize and admire how steadfast he was with his views and how he sought to live out his views. Leading by personal example, he stunned the world when he visited in his cell and forgave Mehmet Ali Agca, the man who attempted to assassinate him in 1981.

His last few years were often interpreted as a desperate clinging to power because he seemed so frail and sick. But he was again setting an example, performing his duties and proving the human mind can continue to function, with brilliance in his case, even as the physical body is consumed by a disease like Parkinson's.

When he again fell ill in March, he moved in and out of the hospital, but toward the end, he chose to be treated at the papal apartments.

We stand to gain learning from him how one can die as one lived. John Paul II loved the world and the Catholic Church with a passion, but was ready to take leave so he could return to the house of his Master with dignity and serenity.

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Cap on drug costs needed

NEAL Cruz's column (PDI, 3/28/05) on the cartel controlling the prices of medicines in this country was an eye-opener. This should prompt all decent Filipinos to come out in support of that bill filed by Rep. Ferjenel Biron of the Fourth District of Iloilo and three others, which seeks to control the prices of medicines.

I may not be a supporter of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, but if she is really sincere in serving the people, she should not waste time certifying the bill as urgent and a priority of her administration. I feel sick seeing our country, more particularly the Senate and House of Representatives, spending so much time on non-essential issues.

As we all know, President Arroyo—as well as all previous presidents, including her late father—has really done nothing to control the prices of medicines in this country.

If Ms Arroyo will only put her mind into the bill by supporting its passage in Congress, that will be a landmark of her administration for all time.

It seems to me that Biron, being a doctor of medicine and a pharmaceutical industry insider whose family has interests in a small drug store chain in the Visayas and a drug manufacturing firm, knows what he is talking about. I take my hat off to this kind of congressman who has guts and a heart for the Filipino people.

For years, in the absence of government control, we have been victimized by multinational drug companies which overprice their products as much as they wish. Like the oil industry, the pharmaceutical world must no longer be allowed to dictate the prices of drugs.

If I'm not mistaken, in other countries, their governments intervene in the setting of drug prices. I recall that during his presidency, US President Bill Clinton once castigated the drug manufacturers for raking in huge profits at the expense of the people.

We're watching how Ms Arroyo will react to the Biron bill.

—MIKE BALAGBIS,
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Cory Aquino was at Edsa

MY pal, Pepe Oliveros, tried to honor Salvador "Doy" Laurel, his client, by saying that Cory Aquino was never at Edsa from Feb. 22-26, 1986. He virtually called Bel Cunanan a liar for saying that she and Cory were together at the POEA building on Feb. 24, 1986. Business Day had an account of it on Page 1 of its issue of Feb. 25, 1986: the President went there against her security's advice.

But, how important could that be? Was Doy at Edsa? Yes, in one real sense, he was there from, say, 1980 to 1986 (before that the Laurels were with the KBL; one could only wonder what might have happened had the courageous, charismatic Laurels joined us in the resistance from Day One of martial law instead of eight years later). President Cory was at Edsa from 1972 to 1986, along with Senators Lorenzo M. Tañada, Jose W. Diokno and Jovito Salonga, just in case Pepe also wonders whether in his files, he has contemporary press accounts on their presence there.

Pepe wrote that, as the President-elect's spokesman, I said on Feb. 24, 1986 that I was not allowed to think. I doubt it, but that was one of my great lines later in the Palace when I was being asked to say more, more, more. In any case, I never took myself too seriously since President Cory would laugh at my advice and implement my jokes.

Who is greater, Doy or Cory? I think the point is moot. Both contributed greatly to ousting the dictator and forever deserve the nation's gratitude. (But I have always said we could accomplish so much more if no one cared who got the credit.) Pepe's sorry letter seems to reflect the lingering animus over why I, along with Cora de la Paz, Toto Estuar, Francis Pangilinan and Al Llorente, did not clear Doy when we probed the Expo scam. But, our finding echoed the Senate's, and in turn was echoed by the Ombudsman and the Supreme Court.

Thus, Pepe did not press the cockamamie P21-million damage suit he filed for Doy against us. But, we should remember Doy at his best. I will always be a fan of the Laurels, to whom the country owes so much, particularly, Doy for sacrificing himself in 1985 to pave the way for the winning team of Cory and Doy, each of whom would have been useless without the other.

—RAV SAGUISAG,
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Palanan, Makati City

Propaganda pawn

CONRADO de Quiros has described the decisive action taken by the government in Camp Bagong Diwa stupid, saying that it would only lead to more terrorism.

He doesn't know the psyche of the Muslims. They respect will, strength and decisiveness. The Muslims might hate US President George W. Bush and Israel but I'm sure they have more respect for them than for the likes of Jacques Chirac, Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton or De Quiros.

Actually, the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center was encouraged by the terrorists' belief that the US counterparts of De Quiros (the New York Times, liberal media, bleeding hearts, the Democrats, etc.) would call for a swift end to any US retaliation, if anything like that happened. Thank God, President Bush frustrated them.

De Quiros sees himself as a defender of the Muslim minority. But the Muslims see him only as a naive pawn to be used for propaganda purposes. The same way the Muslims use the French and Chirac, who are as naive as De Quiros is.

De Quiros, like many Filipinos, is afraid of Muslims. Such fear only encourage Muslims to claim they are better than us, that they are not really Filipinos, that they want their own Sharia-ruled state. All Filipino Muslims who want a Sharia state should migrate to Iran (a theocratic state), and let's see how long they'd last there before they come back to the Philippines, requesting asylum.

In the context of protecting Muslims, what has De Quiros to say about China's oppression of the Muslims in its western region? De Quiros criticizes the Philippine government, but he can't criticize the government of China. What was his reaction to the Tiananmen Square massacre? Was it like Crispin Beltran's, "The Chinese government/communist party has every right to kill the demonstrators because they were a danger to the Party?"

Enough of peace talks. If a Filipino Christian in Bicol cannot carry a gun, why are we letting the Muslims in Mindanao go around fully armed?

—MARC RIVERO,
Makati City

Clarifying Senator Arroyo's misimpressions

I WOULD like to correct certain misimpressions that Sen. Joker Arroyo attributed to my colleagues from the UP School of Economics.

First, we did not snub the Senate hearings on the VAT bill. The truth is, we were not "all invited to express our views" at the nine hearings of the Senate committee on ways and means. The only hearing I was invited to was the one held shortly after the release of the first fiscal crisis paper seven months ago. A colleague and I attended the Senate hearing during which then Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong valiantly attempted to explain the government's fiscal strategy to address the fiscal crisis.

During the three hours that we were there, some senators came in late, made one or two statements that they deemed provocative (and which presumably satisfied media's quota of sound bytes for the day), then left. We were not asked any questions. Neither did we get a chance to ask questions about the presentation of Secretary Amatong. On the way back to Diliman, my colleague got a call on his cell phone from a senator who apologized for their inability to utilize us as resource persons.

Collectively and individually, we have met with certain senators on important issues, at various times and at their request. We take such requests seriously, enough to show up even on a day when a typhoon was raging furiously. This being the case, I do not think that we can be accused of regarding the Senate as "beneath us and unworthy of our testimony."

Second, our study on the VAT is a 17-page paper available on the UP School of Economics website (www.econ.upd.edu.ph) for anyone who cares to read about what we see as the salient issues regarding the proposed VAT amendments. We always welcome a healthy exchange of ideas, especially with those whose views are opposed to ours. I hope that Senator Arroyo would not try to belittle our efforts by referring to our study as a "press release."

Third, it is not true that the "11 UP economics professors sent Prof. Emmanuel de Dios to one session and he gave a brief perfunctory testimony which precluded interpellation." Unlike line agencies in government with hierarchical structures, the UP School of Economics faculty is a collegial body where everyone treats each other as an intellectual peer and friend. We would never "send" anyone to do anything.

Finally, those who know Professor De Dios know him to be very patriotic and highly capable. Delivering a "perfunctory" performance on something is not among his capabilities. I think Senator Arroyo owes my esteemed colleague an apology.

—MARIA SOCORRO
GOCHOCO-BAUTISTA,
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Unusual courage

IT'S about time. I thank the INQUIRER for featuring the speech of Ligaya Acosta in the Talk of the Town section. (PDI, 3/27/05) It shows that the newspaper is not biased after it presented both sides of the issue on population management.

Hats off to the INQUIRER! Now I have reason to believe that you are practicing fair journalism. When I read Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit's speech two weeks ago in the same section, I told myself that the side of Acosta had to be published likewise, especially since the newspaper had featured her story on several occasions.

After Dr. Brian Clowes came out with his exposé on the Kissinger Report, I really wondered deep down why the INQUIRER took some time to come out with the details of his report. But now that you have done so, I honestly believe what INQUIRER president, Sandy Prieto, said once about the INQUIRER's mission: the INQUIRER serves the public by working for social progress. It aims to keep its editorial independence. It's known for its courage, for many media outfits would not even touch on topics that the INQUIRER's reporters and editors write about. I doubted her statement before. All that has changed after Acosta's speech appeared in the newspaper. Nothing sounds better than the truth.

If the INQUIRER only knows how much I admire the fortitude of that woman. She is one good example of courage in a situation that many would rather flee from.

Kudos for a job well done!

—ANNA CECILIA C. ALEJO,
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Expansion of LRT

I APPRECIATE Conrado de Quiros' March 23 column, highlighting some of the positive things that the rapid rail system has brought to Metro Manila. Such a great help the system has been to commuters that one cannot even imagine how life would be without it on an ordinary weekday.

However, our government and especially our urban planners should not sit on their laurels after the initial successes that the present rapid rail system has brought in terms of effectively transporting commuters around Metro Manila. It should be pointed out that the whole concept of putting up rapid rail systems in metropolitan areas is not just to effectively transport people within the metropolis, but more importantly to decongest the metropolis.

A rapid rail system that runs just within the metropolis cannot achieve that. In order for a rapid rail system to effectively decongest a metropolis, it should run several lines going out of the metropolis' environs. In the case of Metro Manila, an effective rapid rail system should reach destinations in the entire Calabarzon area. This way, if Makati or even Quezon City becomes accessible from, say, Cavite within minutes, then people might just start thinking of moving their residences to Cavite, right?

The whole idea is to encourage people to move their homes away from crowded Metro Manila to the less crowded Calabarzon area, and thus decongest our premier metropolis.

—VIDAL CASTILLO,
vidalcastillo
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Vaccines for hepatitis-B sought

CALAMBA CITY—Despite the government's programs to control the spread of hepatitis-B virus, more than eight million Filipinos, or about 10 percent of the country's population, are inflicted with the dreaded disease, a Cavite lawmaker yesterday said.

According to Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya (1st District, Liberal), recent medical studies showed that despite breakthroughs in medical research in modern times, the spread of hepatitis virus is still a major threat worldwide.

Abaya, great-grandson of revolutionary hero Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, said that around the world, there are 200 million people who have been found to be carriers of the virus known to inflict liver disorder.

These carriers, he said, could infect billions of others, especially newborn babies, if not given proper medical attention.

"Hepatitis-B infection is a significant health problem that concerns not only our country but also the rest of the world," he said in his explanatory, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER.

Abaya said studies likewise revealed that hepatitis virus is second to tobacco smoking as the leading cause of liver cancer and other chronic liver disorder like cirrhosis.

He said hepatitis could also be transmitted through contact with infected blood, body fluids and by sexual intercourse.

Alarmed by these figures, Abaya filed House Bill No. 3865, which seeks to mandate all medical institutions and health personnel, public or private, to give hepatitis-B immunization to all newborn infants.

Called the "Newborn Hepatitis-B Immunization Act of 2005," the bill also provides for free immunization for babies born in public health institutions while immunization fees to those delivered in private hospitals should be shouldered by their parents or guardians.

Abaya said newborns are more prone to contact the disease than the grown-ups.

He said there is a 90-percent possibility for babies to be infected with the virus if their mothers are possible carriers.

Abaya said one-fourth of infants who were infected at birth would die from cancer of the liver.

He claimed that existing laws mandating hepatitis immunization for babies are not enough to ensure a stop to the spread of the virus.

He said Republic Act 7846 only orders immunization for infants whose mothers were found to be carrying the hepatitis virus.

But what the country needs, he argued, is a law that would strictly instruct health personnel to administer hepatitis immunization to newborns whether their mothers are positive or not.

The bill said babies should be given immunization within 12 hours after delivery.

It said infants should be administered with the second dose one month after the first shot and be given with the third dose six months after birth.

The bill said the second and third shots should be given at the local health centers where the infant resides. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A BEGGAR in Davao City takes his meal for the day, fried bananas, street food which is a potential source of the hepatitis virus.

Driver in road tragedy charged

SAN FABIAN, Pangasinan—Police on Monday filed charges of multiple homicide against the driver of a Victory Liner bus that smashed into a jeepney full of vacationers here on Saturday night.

Eighteen people, most of them natives of Mt. Province, were killed and 23 others were hurt in that accident.

The bus driver, Senecio Panitan Jr., was arrested and detained at the municipal jail here. He is facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, multiple serious physical injuries and damage to property before the municipal circuit trial court.

Police said Panitan fled after the accident and went to the Nazareth Hospital in Dagupan City to seek medical treatment for injuries he suffered from the collision.

Escape try

But Victor Padaga, Victory Liner dispatcher in Dagupan City, said Panitan fled after someone in the accident site in Barangay Rabon here tried to stab him. Padaga said Panitan failed to identify his attacker.

Investigators said the speeding Dagupan City-bound bus overtook a mini bus and failed to avoid the oncoming jeepney at about 7 p.m. on Saturday.

The victims, according to the police were on their way home to Baguio City when the accident occurred.

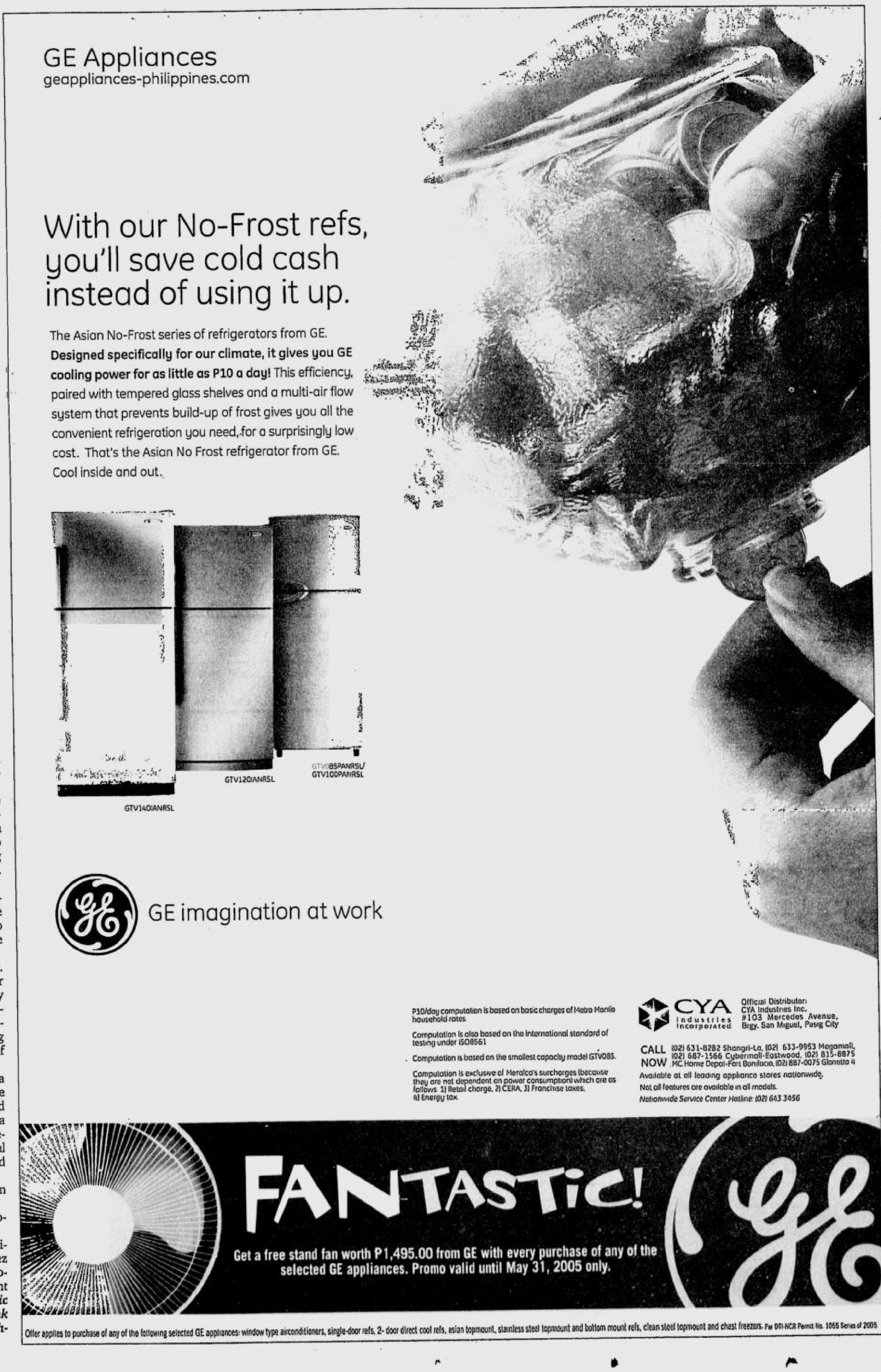
In Baguio City, Mt. Province Rep. Victor Dominguez said they would need to slaughter native pigs to appease the wandering spirits of the victims of the road accident.

Dominguez, a province mate of the victims, said they would conduct the Cordillera death ritual *daw-es* before and after the burial to appease the dead and protect the living.

"This is obligatory in our culture," he said.

"We have to appease their spirits."

The victims' families asked Dominguez to talk with the Victory Liner management on their behalf. *Eric Montoya and Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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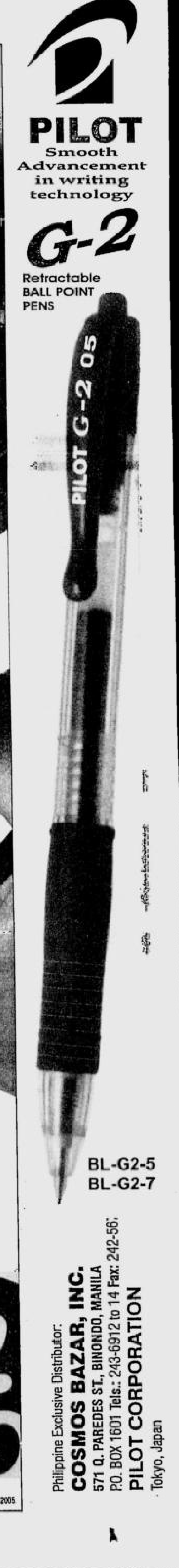

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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Baguio part of John Paul's holy ground

POPE John Paull II celebrates Mass on a flower-bedecked altar at Burnham Park during his visit to Baguio City in 1981. This photo was taken from the coffeetable book "Totus Tuus (Pope John Paul II in the Philippines)."

By Vincent Cabreza and Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

WHEN Karol Wojtyla, the man who became Pope John Paul II, died on Sunday, the park in the country's summer capital, where he held a concelebrated Mass 24 years ago, was canopied with kites.

Children dragged their colorful toys across Burnham Park's Melvin Jones football grounds only a few hours after his death. They had no inkling why the park was important to history's first Polish pope.

Baguio was John Paul II's last stop during his 1981 Philippine tour that brought him to eight cities and one town.

His visit left a political legacy among Cordillerans because his thoughts were extended to the indigenous peoples of the region, according to Fr. Andres Cosalan Jr., vicar priest of the Baguio Catholic diocese. Cosalan was the Ibaloi seminarian who was asked to read the Gospel during the papal Mass before thousands of devotees on Feb. 22, 1981.

The Pope visited the Philippines shortly after the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos announced a token lifting of martial rule.

It was a time when indigenous peoples' rights remained an underground aspiration. Only a year before the Pope's visit, tribal leader Macli-ing Dulag was gunned down by soldiers because he opposed the dictator's plans to build a dam in Kalinga.

Authorities managed to suppress the story about the murder, but Dulag's martyrdom had already reached overseas.

Standing on a specially built flower-adorned stage next to the country's bishops, the Pope reminded Marcos to grant the Igorots their dignity and respect, in front of hundreds of thousands of Catholics from Baguio, La Union and the Ilocos provinces, Pampanga, Tarlac and even Manila, Cosalan said.

The comments surprised many Igorots, who lost themselves in the crowd carrying placards that read, "Totus Tuus (Totally Yours)," said Cosalan, who belongs to an Ibaloi political clan.

Cosalan believed that the late Bishop William Brasseur of the Baguio-Benguet vicariate asked an Ibaloi to join the Mass to dramatize the Pontiff's message.

John Paul II's plane landed at the Loakan Airport, and he rode on a jeepney straight to Burnham Park. In spite of Marcos' extensive security measures, the Pope preferred to interact with the people, Cosalan said.

The Pope even met Igorots in g-strings, who were dancing to the rhythm of indigenous gongs when the jeep approached the park. People had already spilled into the streets, Cosalan said.

"I was stationed at the back because I was still a seminarian … I was behind [Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin and Brasseur]. I could see [Marcos] and he did not react too much to the message. He was very humble," he said.

Reflecting on the American evangelization that converted Ibaloi, Kankanaey, Bontoc and Kalinga tribes at the turn of the 20th century, the Pope said: "I wish to tell you of my special desire: That the Filipinos will become the foremost missionaries of the Church in Asia."

Local culture

Fr. David Ganggangan, assistant priest at the Baguio Cathedral, also deeply appreciated how the Pope stressed in his homily on "integrating the Christian faith into the local culture" of the Igorots.

From the east side of the Melvin Jones ground, white flowers filled both sides of a 100-meter long and more than a meter wide red-painted grass pathway leading to the stage and altar.

"We couldn't afford a red carpet so we just painted the pathway red and adorned both sides of it with white lilies and daisies," said Fr. Vicente Castro, then the assistant priest at the Baguio Cathedral, which took charge of all the preparations for the historic papal visit.

Davao Archbishop Antonio Mabutas, who was then president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, noted in a CBCP letter that the Pope's Baguio address "to our ethnic minority brethren" was "differently nuanced, differently worded to suit each audience."

"And to this he added the thoughts of Pope Paul VI, spoken in Manila a full 10 years ago," the letter said.

"At this moment, one cannot but think of the important calling of the people of the Philippine islands. This land has a special vocation to be the city set on the hill, the lamp standing on high giving shining witness amid the ancient and noble cultures of Asia. Both as individuals and as a nation you are to show forth the light of Christ by the quality of your lives," it quoted the Pope.

Unusually mystical

All those who had close encounters with the Pope swore they felt something unusually mystical, which they attributed to his holiness.

"Honestly, I felt like I was an angel after the Pope gently pressed my forehead with his thumb," said Anniebeth Ayang-ang Guimbatan, who was 11 when she and 16 faculty members of the St. Teresita's School in Lubuagan, Kalinga, took a 14-hour bus trip to see the Pope.

"I felt extraordinary and holy at that moment because I believed the Pope was the person nearest to Jesus Christ," she said.

Silvina Cayap, then a teacher at the Catholic-run San Jose Elementary School in La Trinidad, Benguet, said the Pope's "holy presence amid all the white stage and altar moved me to pray, tears welling in my eyes."

A stamp commemorates the Baguio papal visit, but Cosalan said only history could tell how much influence the Pope might have had in supporting the cause for indigenous Filipino rights.

The Church has always stood for the underprivileged, he said, which was why the Pope's passing had its own symbolism.

"He died on Divine Mercy Sunday … he truly believed that God's mercy benefited everyone," he said.

Cebu Pacific's Summer Schedule

Book early and beat the summer crowd

ORIGIN : MANILA	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
CEBU *Temporarily suspended from April 26 - July 26	5J 557*	Daily	DC9	0130	0240
	5J 559	Daily	DC9	0500	0610
	5J 561	Daily	B757	0700	0810
	5J 563	Daily	DC9	0900	1010
	5J 567	Daily	DC9	1300	1410
	5J 577	W/Th /Sa/Su	B757	1325	1435
	5J 569	Daily	DC9	1500	1610
	5J 571	Daily	DC9	1700	1810
	5J 573	Daily	DC9	1900	2010
DAVAO *Temporarily suspended effective April 8	5J 959*	Daily	DC9	0140	0325
	5J 961	Daily	B757	0430	0610
	5J 963	Daily	B757	1020	1200
	5J 965	Daily	DC9	1330	1515
	5J 967	Daily	DC9	1600	1745
BACOLOD	5J 473	Daily	DC9	0500	0605
	5J 475	Daily	DC9	1000	1105
	5J 479	Daily	DC9	1650	1755
CAGAYAN DE ORO	5J 381	Daily	DC9	0510	0635
	5J 383	Daily	DC9	0920	1045
	5J 385	Daily	DC9	1300	1425
ILOILO	5J 451	Daily	DC9	0520	0620
	5J 455	Daily	DC9	0900	1000
	5J 459	Daily	DC9	1520	1620
KALIBO	5J 339	Daily	DC9	0830	0920
	5J 341	Daily	DC9	1330	1420
PUERTO PRINCESA	5J 637	Daily	DC9	1130	1240
*Via Cebu 5J 557/ 559 / 561 / 563	*/5J 227	T/W/F/Su	DC9	----	1235
SUBIC	5J 104	Th	B757	1500	1530
	5J 104	Su	B757	1520	1550
TACLOBAN	5J 651	Daily	DC9	0610	0720
	5J 655	Daily	DC9	1220	1330
TAGBILARAN	5J 619	Daily	DC9	0700	0820
	5J 623	Daily	DC9	1400	1520
DUMAGUETE	5J 627	Daily	DC9	1100	1215
BUTUAN	5J 787	Daily	DC9	0845	1010
ROXAS	5J 373	Daily	DC9	0515	0610
ZAMBOANGA	5J 851	Daily	DC9	0520	0655

ORIGIN : CEBU	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA * Temporarily suspended from April 26 - July 26	5J 556	M/Th/F/Su	B757	0300	0410
	5J 558*	Daily	DC9	0400	0510
	5J 560	Daily	DC9	0700	0810
	5J 562	Daily	B757	0900	1010
	5J 564	Daily	DC9	1130	1240
	5J 568	Daily	DC9	1500	1610
	5J 570	Daily	DC9	1700	1810
	5J 572	Daily	DC9	1900	2010
	5J 574	Daily	DC9	2100	2210
DAVAO	5J 593	Daily	DC9	0835	0925
	5J 597	Daily	DC9	1450	1545
ILOILO	5J 164	Daily	DC9	1730	1805
KALIBO	5J 232	M/Th/Sa	DC9	1220	1300
PUERTO PRINCESA	5J 227	T/W/F/Su	DC9	1125	1235
ZAMBOANGA	5J 431	M/W/F/Sa	DC9	0910	1005

ORIGIN : DAVAO	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA * Temporarily suspended effective April 8	5J 960*	Daily	DC9	0425	0610
	5J 962	Daily	B757	0740	0920
	5J 964	Daily	B757	1300	1440
	5J 966	Daily	DC9	1625	1810
	5J 968	Daily	DC9	1825	2010
CEBU	5J 594	Daily	DC9	1005	1055
	5J 598	Daily	DC9	1555	1650
ILOILO (VIA CEBU)	5J 598/164	Daily	DC9	1555	1805
ZAMBOANGA	5J 393	Tu/Th/Su	DC9	0910	1005

ORIGIN : ILOILO	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 452	Daily	DC9	0700	0800
	5J 456	Daily	DC9	1040	1140
	5J 460	Daily	DC9	1700	1800
CEBU	5J 161	Daily	DC9	0720	0755
DAVAO (VIA CEBU)	5J 161/593	Daily	DC9	0720	0925

ORIGIN : ZAMBOANGA	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 852	Daily	DC9	1045	1220
CEBU	5J 432	M/W/F/Sa	DC9	0735	0830
DAVAO	5J 394	T/Th/Su	DC9	0735	0830

ORIGIN : KALIBO	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 340	Daily	DC9	1000	1050
	5J 342	Daily	DC9	1500	1550
CEBU	5J 231	M/Th/Sa	DC9	1340	1420

ORIGIN : PUERTO PRINCESA	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 638	Daily	DC9	1320	1430
*VIA CEBU 5J 568 / 570 / 572 / 574	5J 228/*	T/W/F/Su	DC9	1310	----
CEBU	5J 228	T/W/F/Su	DC9	1310	1420

ORIGIN : DUMAGUETE	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 628	Daily	DC9	1255	1410

ORIGIN : ROXAS	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 374	Daily	DC9	0700	0755

ORIGIN : SUBIC	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 105	F	B757	0240	0310
	5J 105	M	B757	0340	0410

ORIGIN : TACLOBAN	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 652	Daily	DC9	0800	0910
	5J 656	Daily	DC9	1410	1520

ORIGIN : TAGBILARAN	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 620	Daily	DC9	0900	1020
	5J 624	Daily	DC9	1600	1720

ORIGIN : CAGAYAN DE ORO	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 382	Daily	DC9	0715	0840
	5J 384	Daily	DC9	1125	1250
	5J 386	Daily	DC9	1505	1630

ORIGIN : BUTUAN	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 788	Daily	DC9	1050	1215

ORIGIN : BACOLOD	FLT NO.	Freq.	ACFT	ETD	ETA
MANILA	5J 474	Daily	DC9	0645	0750
	5J 476	Daily	DC9	1155	1300
	5J 480	Daily	DC9	1845	1950

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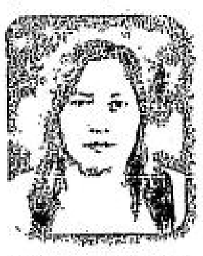
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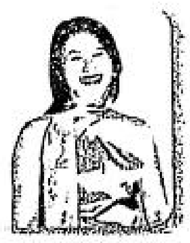
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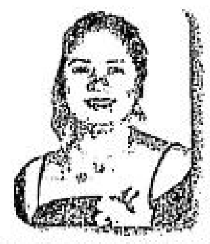
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By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—A company that distributes cabbage varieties to farmers in this province found itself in hot water after a batch of its seeds yielded defective and unmarketable crops.

The Benguet provincial board has trained its guns on Allied Botanical Corp., a firm based in Quezon City, following a complaint from a farmer in Atok town that her Chinese cabbage (*wombok*) grew abnormally and that traders shunned from buying her harvest.

The board said it would file the appropriate legal charges should investigation show the company was liable.

Chinese cabbage is one of the major agricultural products of the province, particularly Atok town, where the farms are considered best suited to the vegetable.

Theresa Uy, a farmer, said she planted for the first time on her 500-square meter farm the "Green Cool" Chinese cabbage variety dealt by Allied.

Uy said she applied on the variety the same farming and production techniques that she had used on her previous crops.

Surprise

She said she was surprised later to gather cabbages that had "flowers instead of heads with curly leaves and mature looking appearance."

Fred Rufino, Atok agricultural officer, confirmed Uy's observations and said the traits were uncharacteristic of normal Chinese cabbages.

Rufino said Uy tried to sell her harvest at the vegetable trading post here but she was refused since the vegetable's bluish green color alone had turned off prospective buyers.

Agriculturists here call the problem "bolting Chihese cabbage."

But Willy Co, Allied president, denied any responsibility, saying the problem could be a case of "mistaken identity" since Uy could have actually planted a different variety.

In a letter to the provincial board, Co said Green Cool is a disease-resistant variety produced by Takii in Japan that, he noted, is a big company with a solid reputation worldwide.

"We find Uy's complaint extremely unusual," Co's letter said. "Tens of thousands of Green Cool cans had been dispersed to dealers and farmers in the province and we never encountered any problem."

Unusual

In fact, he said, Green Cool is the most popular variety of Chinese cabbage that is being planted in the Cordillera.

Co, though, asked for more time for the company to conduct its own investigation.

Dr. Sonwright Maddul, vice president for research and extension of the Benguet State University, said Allied must pull out all the seeds it had distributed to its dealers should investigation prove that the seeds were defective.

Maddul said the prevailing temperature might have something to do with the bolting of Green Cool.

He said Uy planted the variety from November 2004 to February this year when the temperature in the province was really cold.

He said the variety must be planted from April to May to observe if the crops will still experience bolting.

TOBACCO BLOOM LEONCIO BALBIN/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
The festival queen of the recently held Candon City Tobacco Festival displays her costume during a parade around the city to promote its No. 1 industry, tobacco-growing.

Another SLEx accident kills 5, injures 18 others

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Five people were killed while 18 others were seriously injured after a jeep they were riding in went wayward and ran into a tree along the South Luzon Expressway (SLEx) in Biñan, Laguna on Monday afternoon.

Jimmy de la Cruz, acting chief of the Traffic Safety and Security Department of SLEx, said among the fatalities were Malou Palomares, 27; Edgar Neala, 32, of Tagkawayan, Quezon; Mauricio Alvarez, 28, a resident of Sta. Rosa, Laguna; and two still unidentified male and female passengers.

De la Cruz said Palomares and the two unidentified victims died while being rushed to nearby Perpetual Help Hospital (PHH) while Neala and Alvarez were declared dead on arrival at the Biñan Doctors' Hospital (BDH).

Patrol cars of the Philippine National Construction Corp. brought 12 of the injured passengers to the PHH while the remaining six others, including driver Josefino de la Cruz, were rushed to the BDH.

De la Cruz said the jeep had come from Alabang and was on its way to Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

He said the jeep was speeding at the southbound direction of the superhighway at around 3 p.m. when its driver suddenly lost control of the wheels, sending the vehicle to swerve to the right side.

The jeep, he said, was probably traveling at a high speed, "maybe more than 80 kilometers per hour."

"The victims said they just momentarily felt that the vehicle was out of control. Just moments after that, the jeep smashed the hardwood tree," De la Cruz told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said the driver remained in critical condition. He said he could not tell if the driver was intoxicated when the accident happened.

De la Cruz said the force of the impact wrecked the front portion of the jeep.

Biliran gov denies he had bodyguards among 7 robbers

NAVAL, Biliran—Gov. Rogelio Espina denied that the robbers who victimized a Vietnamese and his Filipino wife on March 7 were his bodyguards.

Espina, in a statement on March 18, said among the seven men, who were all captured several hours after the robbery, only one man named Eugenio Corpin was found to be an employee of the provincial government.

He added that none of the arrested robbers, including Corpin, worked as bodyguard of the Espina family.

Corpin was issued an appointment as security agent and was assigned to the Civil Security Unit as a guard at the capitol grounds, not as a jail guard as earlier reported.

At the time of his arrest, his appointment was still being processed by the provincial government, the governor said.

As security agent, Corpin was issued a 9 mm pistol, which was found in his possession during his arrest. It was the only item owned by the provincial government involved in the heist, contrary to an earlier report that stated that some of the seized firearms and getaway motorcycles used in the robbery belong to the provincial government.

The governor said that while it was true that he regretted the incident and even commended the police for their efforts, he felt betrayed just by Corpin. He said he gave Corpin a chance to be employed by the provincial government.

Rosana Solite, the supervising officer of the Biliran Parole and Probation Office, also said in the same statement that Corpin had never been a client of her office, contrary to the report that said Corpin and another suspect, Nicomedes Azur, were released on parole from the national penitentiary.

She concurred that Azur was a parolee but has since served his time.

PDI Visayas Bureau

Australian facing sex raps found dead in Bacolod home

BACOLOD CITY—An Australian, who was facing a sexual harassment case, was found dead inside his home in Barangay Taculing here in what the police said was a case of suicide.

The body of Allan Nevil Keleher, 74, was discovered at about 1 p.m. on Monday by Janeph Bais Alpiere, 23, on the second floor of the victim's three-story house at Rio Vista Homes.

Alpiere, Keleher's househelp for five years, said he was scheduled to clean the house of the victim on Monday when he saw the Australian bathed in his own blood with a gun in his right hand.

Keleher suffered a gunshot wound in the head from a .38 cal. revolver.

Senior Insp. Jonathan Lorilla, police precinct 6 commander, said initial findings showed that Keleher killed himself but police would conduct a paraffin test on the Australian to determine if there was foul play.

Mita Chuvy Arguelles, Bacolod Alien Control officer, said Keleher was a holder of Australian passport no. E-7067657 issued Feb. 14, 2001. He was born on April 15, 1930 in Wondai, Australia.

Keleher entered the Philippines as a tourist on May 6, 2004. His visa was valid only until March 2.

Alpiere said Keleher was facing charges for sexual harassment filed against him by his former houseboy, Danilo Flores, in Manila.

Keleher had been summoned several times by the court, but he refused to answer, Alpiere said.

His depression started when his Tamaraw FX was stolen by Angelito Caballera, a former house caretaker, Alpiere said. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Info exec named tourism director

TACLOBAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has appointed her information officer in Eastern Visayas as the new Department of Tourism (DOT) director in the region.

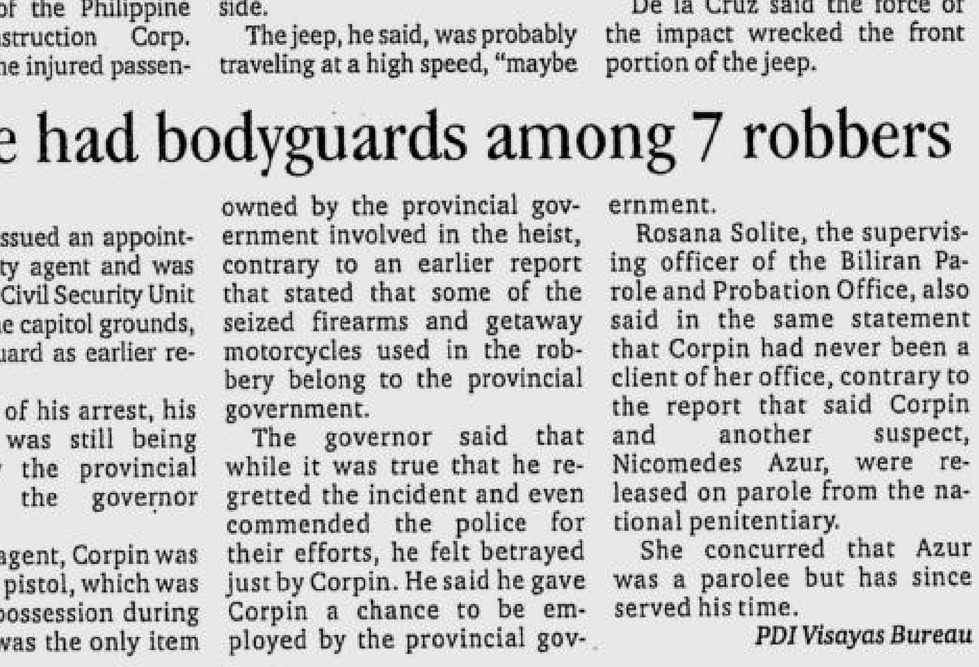
Karen Tiopes received on Monday afternoon the fax copy of her appointment as tourism regional director although it was signed by the President on March 15.

"I am really thankful to the Lord as well as to those who helped me and at the same time, I feel challenged (of my new post as tourism regional chief)," she told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

She would replace Trina Dacuycuy, who was acting DOT regional director when tourism regional chief Norma Morante retired from government service on Feb. 23.

Tiopes, 41, said President Arroyo was expected to name her replacement for Philippine Information Agency Eastern Visayas director before she takes her oath for her new post before Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano on April 13.

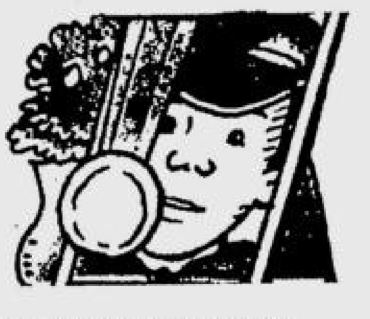
Tiopes was named PIA regional director on March 3, 2003. Before that, she worked for four years at the Leyte's provincial tourism office. *Joey Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*



ATTRACTION CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A portion of the beach in Alaminos City, Pangasinan is all spruced up for the expected arrival of tourists to the Hundred Islands National Park. The city government, under Mayor Hernani Braganza, vowed to promote the area as a major tourist destination following reports of sightings of dolphins and the presence of various fish species that have started to return following a crackdown on illegal fishing.

ROUNDUP

Bulacan cop honored



CITY OF SAN JOSE DEL MONTE—Police and local officials on Thursday honored the Bulacan policeman who was killed during last week's encounter with New People's Army (NPA) rebels for his bravery and courage. SPO2 Mario Llarinas, 37, was killed by NPA rebels in Barangay Citrus on March 30. Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, awarded Llarinas with the Philippine National Police's "Medalya ng Kagalingan." Supt. Pedro Ramos, police chief here, said an NPA rebel, identified as Erick Sablayan, was killed in follow-up operations. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Ex-soldier hunted for kid's death

BALANGA CITY—Police are hunting a former Army soldier who allegedly beat up and killed a year-old girl in Mariveles town on March 29. Senior Supt. Hernando Zafra, Bataan police director, said former Army Sgt. Edwin Melendres beat up Leslie Ferrer, daughter of his live-in partner Luisa, until the girl lost consciousness. Zafra said Melendres asked his neighbors' help in bringing Ferrer, who also had cigarette burns in the legs, to the Mariveles health center. Ferrer died while being taken to the clinic. Reports said the girl was left in the care of Melendres after her mother left their house in Barangay Camaya in Mariveles to look for a job.
Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Old vans can't renew franchise

CITY OF CALAPAN—Starting March, van models that are more than 10 years old can no longer renew their franchises even if these are still valid. Land Transportation Office-Calapan chief Zeny Garcia said the more than 12-year-old vans would revert to private use and whatever remaining franchise would be valid only in April. Garcia added that surprise inspections by the LTO revealed that there are fewer colorum vehicles now, following the strict implementation of Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board policies. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

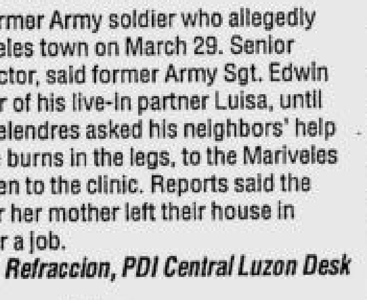
Disaster management proposal

CITY OF CALAPAN—Oriental Mindoro Gov. Arnan Panaligan has proposed the creation of a disaster management cluster, according to Cesar Tallada, provincial planning and development officer. This will include the development of a weather forecasting, as well as a monitoring and networking system, to monitor typhoon movements, so that the province will be less dependent on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration. Tallada added the Association of Mindoreños, a group of professionals based in Manila, will help in the project. A group of 24-hour volunteers can also monitor typhoon developments via satellite and Internet. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mangroves for tsunami prevention

CITY OF CALAPAN—A preliminary geo-hazard study on Oriental Mindoro conducted by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources included a map that showed the presence of five faults crossing the Mindoro Island. Given these faults, a tsunami is a potential risk, according to Ronilo Salac, newly appointed Occidental Mindoro OIC provincial environment and natural resources officer. As a cushion, Salac, former Socorro, Oriental Mindoro community environment and natural resources officer, proposed the planting of at least one kilometer stretch of mangroves along coastlines. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

1st woman president for IBP Ecija



THE NUEVA ECIJA chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines has scored a first when it recently elected its first woman president in 32 years, according to a news release. Lawyer Olivia Velasco-Jacoba, who has earlier served the IBP chapter as vice president, director, secretary, and treasurer, is married to lawyer Ellis Jacoba, who himself was past president of the chapter. She had worked as a legal researcher, branch clerk and OIC Clerk of Court and provincial sheriff, assistant provincial attorney of Nueva Ecija, and city attorney of San Jose City. The induction rites will be held April 7 at the Lakewood City Golf Clubhouse in Cabanatuan City.

3 suspected drug traders slain

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—Three suspected illegal drug traders were killed in a shootout with policemen in Barangay Lalakhan here on Friday. Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, said the suspects were members of the Bahala na Gang operating in Bulacan and Pampanga. He said the group was also involved in robbery and car theft. He identified two of the slain suspects as Rodolfo Benegas, 28, of Pandi town; and a certain J.R., the group's leader and a resident of Pampanga. The group, according to police reports, was in the boundary of Lalakhan and Sta. Clara villages and was about to deliver shabu to a buyer when the shootout ensued.
Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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BRITAIN'S Prince Charles (left), his fiance Camilla Parker-Bowles and Prime Minister Tony Blair attend memorial Mass for Pope John Paul II at Westminster Cathedral Monday. AFP

CUBAN President Fidel Castro (seated) shows the text he had just written in the book of condolences at the nunciature in Havana. Communist Cuba has taken the death of John Paul II to heart with its revolutionary leader Castro, a former altar boy, praising the late Pontiff's "tireless" work for peace and justice. AFP

Some tales from the Vatican crypt

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II is to be interred Friday in the crypt of St. Peter's Basilica in the company of many of his predecessors.

The Pope's remains will lie in a tomb that was occupied for 37 years by Pope John XXIII until it was vacated in 2000, according to reports yet to be confirmed by the Vatican.

John Paul II himself presided over the transfer of John XXIII's remains to the basilica above, in the chapel of Saint Jerome, upon his beatification.

The late Pope will be buried near Benedetto XV, whose tomb lies beside that of John Paul II's immediate predecessor, John Paul I, who died just 33 days after his election in 1978.

His other neighbors will be Innocent IX, Julius III and Paul VI, as well as 17th-century Queen Christina of Sweden.

Near the tomb of Paul VI, situated directly below the main altar of St. Peter's, is what archeologists believe to be the grave of St. Peter, the first Pope and disciple of Jesus.

St. Peter's crypt, covering the entire area below the basilica, has yielded a wealth of artifacts, not only of the Roman Catholic Church but also of early Christian civilization.

Restorations of the late 9th century shed light on the structure of the earlier Constantine basilica, notably the support pillars and columns and traces of the perimeter wall.

Another layer lies below the crypt, a veritable "city of the dead" from ancient Roman times with streets, chapels and some stunning frescoes. *AFP*

Polish pope made secret visit to RP in '73

By Fran Katigbak

A LITTLE-KNOWN fact about the late Pope John Paul II was the first visit he ever made to the Philippines in 1973—under very cloak-and-dagger circumstances.

The Polish cleric, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, had to make a surreptitious two-hour visit to a shrine here because at the time the Philippines had no diplomatic relations with communist Poland.

That shrine, the first place that the late Pope ever visited in the Philippines, was the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help at the Baclaran church.

According to Fr. Rey Culaba, CSSR, the caretaker of the Baclaran shrine, authorities at the then Manila International Airport just turned a blind eye to the cardinal's not being in possession of a valid visa to visit the Philippines.

"The [1973] visit lasted only two hours because he was an illegal immigrant," said Culaba.

Cardinal Wojtyla was on his way to the National Eucharistic Congress in Australia, and made the stopover in the Philippines.

He was said to have had the permission of Jaime Cardinal Sin's predecessor, Rufino Cardinal Santos, to visit the Baclaran shrine.

That first visit must have been a very memorable one for the late Pope, a known Marian devotee, according to Culaba.

Who's with GMA as she leaves tonight for Vatican

From page A1

from the earlier reported 100.

No reason was given why the others who had signified intent to join the President backed out, the source said.

Only Luli

From the First Family, only Ms Arroyo's daughter Luli will join the trip to the Vatican. Bunye did not reply when asked why the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, was staying behind.

Bunye named the Filipino clergy members attending the Pope's funeral as Cebu Archbishop Cardinal Ricardo Vidal, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, Ipil Bishop Antonio Ledesma, Bataan Bishop Socrates Villegas, Butuan Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos, Bishop Oscar Solis of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and Fr. Leonardo Mercado, executive director of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' committee on interfaith dialogues.

Sister Luz Mijares, president of the Association of Major Superiors of the Philippines, Sister Luz Solijon, Sister Ma. Clarissa Valleque, and Teresa Tunay will also attend the funeral, he said.

Vidal, the other Filipino cardinal apart from Jaime Cardinal Sin who is eligible to vote for the Pope's successor, was to leave for the Vatican at 8:30 last night on Thai Airways' flight TG 625. He was to take a connecting flight from Bangkok to Rome.

Conveying condolence

Bunye said the President would fly to the Vatican for "the principal purpose of conveying condolence on the death of the Holy Father."

Among the government officials taking the flight, he mentioned only himself and Susan Vargas, deputy executive secretary for administration and finance, as part of the unofficial delegation.

He said that he would be traveling in his official capacity as the President's spokesperson, and that his expenses would be shouldered by his office.

Bunye was evasive when asked how the President had chosen the members of her official party.

"I don't know the circumstances," he said. "What we have here is the list, and we only go by the list."

He added: "We chose to ride a PAL plane because this is the most convenient way for the President to fly directly to the Vatican."

Per Malacañang's earlier announcement, Ms Arroyo was to have left last night.

Her flight schedule was moved because of the cocktail dinner she hosted in Malacañang last night for the delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union general assembly ongoing at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Nonstop flight

Ms Arroyo, her party and members of the unofficial delegation will fly to Rome on a nonstop 14-hour flight from Manila on an Airbus 340, which can seat more than 200 people.

The flight is considered special because PAL has not flown to Europe since 1998.

The President is expected back in Manila at 10 a.m. on April 9 on the same chartered plane.

A source at the airport said it was not certain if the other passengers would also accompany the President back to Manila.

The source said that on chartered flights, passengers are also charged for the cost of jet fuel and the parking fee at an international airport, among other things.

58th birthday

While her flight to the Vatican had been moved back, the President stuck to her work schedule on her 58th birthday yesterday.

At her hometown of Lubao in Pampanga, where she and her family heard Mass at St. Augustine Church, she asked for prayers for "the eternal repose of Pope John Paul II, who visited the Philippines and loved the Filipinos so much."

"I will bring to the Vatican the prayers and love of all the Filipino people," she said.

In Malacañang, the President conferred the Golden Heart award with the rank of Grand Cross on Carol Bellamy, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), and gave recognition to two employees of the Manila International Airport Authority, who had turned over to authorities large sums of money left behind by passengers.

Ms Arroyo also presided over a meeting of the National Anti-Poverty Council, where officials surprised her with a birthday cake and a photograph signed by members of her Cabinet. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra in Manila; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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WHO ARE GOING

VATICAN CITY—Kings, queens and heads of state and government will join pilgrims for the funeral of Pope John Paul on Friday in what is expected to be the biggest gathering at the Vatican in its history.

US President George W. Bush will head the delegation from the United States, the White House said. Britain's Prince Charles postponed his wedding for a day in order to attend.

The following is a list of some of the dignitaries who have so far said they will attend:

GEORGE and LAURA BUSH AP

United States—President George W. Bush and Laura Bush

Russia—Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov

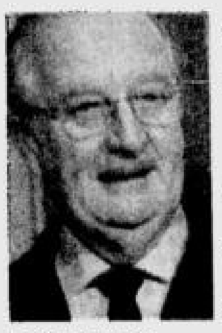
Italy—President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi

France—President Jacques Chirac

Germany—President Horst Koehler, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder

Britain—Prince Charles, Prime Minister Tony Blair

Canada—Prime Minister Paul Martin



BELGIUM King Albert II REUTERS

Spain—King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero

European Union—European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso

Brazil—President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva

Philippines—President Macapagal-Arroyo

Austria—President Heinz Fischer, Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel

Belgium—King Albert II and Queen Paola, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt

Czech Republic—President Vaclav Klaus, Foreign Minister Cyril Svoboda

Ireland—President Mary McAleese, Prime Minister Bertie Ahern

PORTUGUESE President Jorge Sampaio AFP

Portugal—President Jorge Sampiao

Hungary—President Ferenc Madl, Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany

Slovenia—President Janez Drnovsek, Prime Minister Janez Jansa

Slovakia—President Ivan Gasparovic, Parliament Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky

Latvia—President Vaira Vike-Freiberga

Lithuania—President Valdas Adamkas

Estonia—President Arnold Ruutel

Sweden—King Carl XVI Gustav and Queen Silvia

Greece—President Karolos Papoulias

GERMAN Chancellor Schroeder AP

Cyprus—President Tassos Papadopoulos

Norway—Queen Sonja and Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik (King Harald is in hospital recovering from heart surgery)

Ukraine—President Viktor Yushchenko

Croatia—President Stjepan Mesic, Prime Minister Ivo Sanader

Serbia and Montenegro—President Svetozar Marovic

Serbia—President Boris Tadic

Kosovo—President Ibrahim Rugova

Macedonia—President Branko Crvenkovski

Turkey—Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan

BRITAIN'S Prime Minister Tony Blair and his wife Cherie AP

Iran—President Mohammad Khatami

Israel—President Moshe Katsav, Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom

Palestinians—Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie

Syria—President Bashar al-Assad

Lebanon—President Emile Lahoud (Maronite Christian), Prime Minister Omar Karami (Sunni Muslim) and parliamentary speaker Nabih Berri (Shiite Muslim)

Argentina—Vice President Daniel Scioli, Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa

KHATAMI of Iran AP

Chile—Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker. President Ricardo Lagos cannot attend as his 108-year-old mother is very ill.

Cuba—National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon

South Africa—Deputy President Jacob Zuma

India—Vice President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat

Pakistan—Religious Affairs Minister Mohammad Ejaz ul Haq

Sri Lanka—Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse

Japan—Yoriko Kawaguchi, the previous foreign minister

Bangladesh—Food and Disaster Management Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf

Malaysia—Bernard Dompok, minister in charge of the civil service, Abdullah Mohamad Zin, minister in charge of religious affairs

Indonesia—Social Welfare Minister Alwi Shihab, Religious Affairs Minister Maftuh Basyuni

SYRIA'S Bashar al-Assad REUTERS

Australia—Governor General Michael Jeffery, who represents Britain's Queen Elizabeth as Australia's head of state

New Zealand—Governor General Silvia Cartwright

Singapore—Deputy Prime Minister Prof. S. Jayakumar

Yushchenko of Ukraine AP

Religious leaders:

Metropolitan Kirill, head of external relations for the Moscow Patriarchate. (Patriarch Alexiy II—who repeatedly refused to meet the Pope—will not attend)

Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I

Greek Orthodox leader, Archbishop Christodoulos

Turkey's Armenian Patriarch Mesrob II

Spiritual head of the Anglican Church, Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams

Chief Rabbinate Director-General Oded Viner

Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir

Norwegian Bishop Finn Wagle of the Protestant state church

Reuters

SPAIN'S Carlos AP

InqBox Question of the Week
What are your memories of Pope John Paul II?
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Senders of d best 20 texts as publishd in Tuesday's InqBox wiL each receiv an *Inquirer Mug! U
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inquirer ad name/city/mailing address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

Watch out for Makati 'Salisi' gang

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WATCH out for thieves posing as visitors and blending with the office crowd, the Makati police department warned yesterday.

"These thieves strike during lunch break, sneaking away with handbags and other personal belongings of office employees," said Inspector Marlon Almoguerra, chief of the Makati Police Station's theft and robbery section.

Almoguerra said theft incidents pulled off by so-called "Salisi gangs" were common in buildings in the city's commercial district.

These thieves, who could take the victim's valuables during a brief moment of distraction (or "*nasalisihan*" in Filipino), have victimized employees in government offices and private companies throughout Makati, even within the security-conscious Central Business District (CBD), the section chief said.

"There was a rise in these cases in Makati five years ago. What they do is bring fake IDs, use fake names, introduce themselves as job applicants or pretend to be employees or salesmen," Almoguerra explained.

'Salisi' thieves

The "Salisi" thieves are all dressed up and know how to conduct themselves in such a way that they are able to leave the building undetected with their loot. "They usually work in groups and carry backpacks or shoulder bags," Almoguerra said.

Among the thieves' choice picks are cellular phones, compact disc players, and other handy electronic gadgets, laptop computers, wallets and handbags.

One of them struck at the INQUIRER office on Chino Roces Avenue around lunchtime last Wednesday. Witnesses said a woman in business attire passed by the editorial office at the third floor and took off with the cellular phone and wallet of a female employee.

Apparently, the thief walked past the INQUIRER's lobby security undetected, and entered the editorial office through one of the electronically-locked doors. Security officers, meanwhile, denied seeing a female outsider going to the editorial offices at that time.

Almoguerra could not say how many theft cases involving "Salisi" gangs have been reported in Makati for the past year, except that such incidents were among the 233 theft cases registered in 2004.

Warning aired vs fake goods

THE CHAMBER of Cosmetics Industry of the Philippines (CCIP) has launched an information campaign to warn the public of the sale of fake versions of some of its members' products.

The campaign has been endorsed by the National Consumer Affairs Council—Department of Trade and Industry (NCAC-DTI) and the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

The Chamber said in a statement that several unscrupulous individuals have been misrepresenting themselves as distributors of shampoo, cologne, powder, makeup and lotion using fake identification cards and uniforms.

Counterfeiters also falsify receipts and invoices of legitimate manufacturers and distributors.

These persons prey not only on individual consumers but also on newly-opened stores that have not yet established any business relationship with legitimate distributors and manufacturers.

They offer to provide free display counters and other incentives, promising to deliver these in a few days provided the storeowner pays in cash.

Any information on individuals involved in these activities should be reported to the Chamber, DTI and BFAD at CCIP, 683-7434; NCAC-DTI, 890-4930, and BFAD, 1-800-103-253-633.

Tension grips Caloocan over Malonzo appointment

SUPPORTERS of former Caloocan City Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo staged a wildcat strike in front of City Hall yesterday afternoon and paralized operations for three hours.

About 100 Malonzo supporters arrived at about 1:00 p.m. to accompany a son and the wife of the former mayor.

The son, Christopher, and Gigi Malonzo were at the building to attend the City Council's session, according to a leader of the group who identified himself only as Yadao.

The younger Malonzo, Yadao said, has been appointed by Malacañang to the City Council as replacement of 1st District Councilor Eduardo Rosca, who died of a heart attack last year.

The INQUIRER obtained a copy of the appointment paper dated March 31 and signed by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

But according to Councilor Henry Cammayo, all the members of the City Council is opposing the appointment.

"We were not consulted and we have passed a resolution recommending the daughter of the former councilor (as his replacement)," Cammayo said.

He added that the councilors decided to boycott the session yesterday when they learned that Malonzo's son would be attending the session.

"We are standing by our resolution and would take it to court if necessary," Cammayo said.

While the the Malonzos were inside the building, City Hall employees locked all entrances except the main entrance where more than fifty male employees stood guard.

"We should be allowed to enter," said Mila, a visitor who said she was there to process some papers. "I don't care about your politics. We are not involved."

Even other employees who went out for lunch were not immediately allowed to enter the building.

"Sorry, we were ordered not allow anyone to enter," said a security guard on the side entrance when employees from engineering tried to get inside the building.

"These are just precautionary measures," said Alvin Feliciano, spokesperson of city mayor Enrico Echeverri. He added, "Someone might sneak in something and make trouble."

Echiverri defeated the wife of Malonzo during the mayoralty elections last year.

Before leaving, the Malonzos conducted a press conference in front of City Hall during which a commotion erupted.

Men in plain clothes suddenly grabbed one of their supporters, claiming he was a troublemaker.

"He instigated an earlier brawl," a man grabbing him by the collar said.

It was unclear what trouble the Malonzo supporter initiated.

Nancy Carvajal

3 escape from Mandaluyong jail

GREAT DIVIDE

ERIK ARAZAS

A long fence of wood and colorful plastic canvas lines a portion of South Super Highway to hide squatter shanties along the thoroughfare. The fence was put up as delegates to the 112th Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly began to arrive.

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THREE suspects who had been arrested for drug-related violations managed to escape from their detention cell at the Mandaluyong City police station the other day.

Fellow detainees inside the crowded cell they shared with the three claimed they had no inkling that a jailbreak was in progress.

Prison watch

Police authorities recently said they were keeping an eye on all detention facilities nationwide following the bloody jailbreak attempt of suspected Abu Sayyaf members in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City last month.

Mandaluyong City police chief Senior Supt. Ericson Velasquez told the INQUIRER yesterday that an investigation was ongoing to determine who would be held responsible for the security lapse.

Velasquez identified the suspects as Arnel Macasaet, Renato Barroa, and Gerald Bonifacio.

They are in their mid-20s, the police chief added.

Escape plan

The three could have escaped at about 5 a.m. on Monday by detaching the plywood covering part of the ceiling of the makeshift toilet inside the cell.

The cell is at the back of the criminal investigation unit office.

Police said the three were still inside the cell when duty officers checked on them at about 4 a.m.

But when a head count of the detainees was conducted three hours later, the three were nowhere to be found.

Unaware

The detainees said they had noticed that part of the ceiling had been pried open.

"We were sleeping. We did not hear them move about," a detainee told the INQUIRER.

The three had been arrested for drug-related violations in different police operations last week.

Monitoring

Because of the jailbreak, police officials ordered all shift supervisors to act as jail wardens.

Duty officers would check on the detainees every 30 minutes, according to a memorandum issued hours after the incident.

Don't touch billboards, CA tells MMDA

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) is not ready to give up just yet, despite a recent Court of Appeals resolution affirming its earlier decision to uphold a lower court order that prevented the agency from dismantling billboards and other signages along the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) line on Edsa.

"The court has not decided on the main issue yet, which is whether or not they have the right to use the MRT line for the purpose," said MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

On March 14, the Court of Appeals Seventh Division denied for lack of merit a MMDA motion asking the appellate court to reconsider a decision it had rendered in August 2004. This order affirmed a preliminary injunction a Pasig Court issued two years ago which prohibited the agency from demolishing advertising signages in MRT facilities.

"What is involved in this petitions is the question as to whether or not the trial court committed grave abuse of discretion in issuing the questioned order, and we find there was no abuse of discretion committed. The merits of the whole case have yet to be decided by the trial court," said the appellate court's resolution.

The Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 155 had issued a preliminary injunction on March 25, 2002, in response to a civil suit filed by Trackworks Rail Transit Advertising, Vending, and Promotions Inc. asking the court to stop the MMDA from bringing down signages it had installed on the MRT Line.

Court records showed that Trackworks, a private advertisement company, had been awarded the "exclusive right to undertake advertising and promotional activities along the exterior and interior structures of the MRT 3," through a contract it entered with the Metro Rail Transit Corporation (MRTC) Limited, the builder and owner of the MRT line.

The MRTC had the authority to hire advertising services for the MRT line, being the facility's owner for 25 years from the time it signed a build-lease-transfer contract with the government in 1997, through the Department of Transportation and Communication.

. Trackworks filed the suit after the agency, then headed by now Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, proceeded to demolish Trackworks' MRT billboards and signages, citing that the placement of ads within Edsa was against the National Building Code and MMDA Regulation 96-009.

The regulation prohibited the installation of billboards and other kinds of signages on roads, sidewalks, center islands, trees, parks, overpasses, and underpasses, particularly those "that obstruct the view and distract the attention of motorists along the national road."

"We will review our options, and see if it would still be worthwhile to appeal the decision. But we will follow the court, whatever the decision may be," said MMDA Deputy Chair Cesar Lacuna. The demolition of obstructive billboards on other portions of Edsa would continue as these do not fall under the court order.

Teachers assert Arroceros Park ownership

By Tina G. Santos

PUBLIC school teachers in Manila have finally broken their silence, insisting that they are the rightful owners of controversial Arroceros Park.

"It is unfortunate that those protesting the building project keep overlooking the fact that there is a rightful owner of the property, with a prerogative to use it for its own legitimate requirements," Manila Division of City Schools (DCS) Superintendent Ma. Luisa Quiñones said, referring to Winner Foundation, an environmental organization taking care of the park.

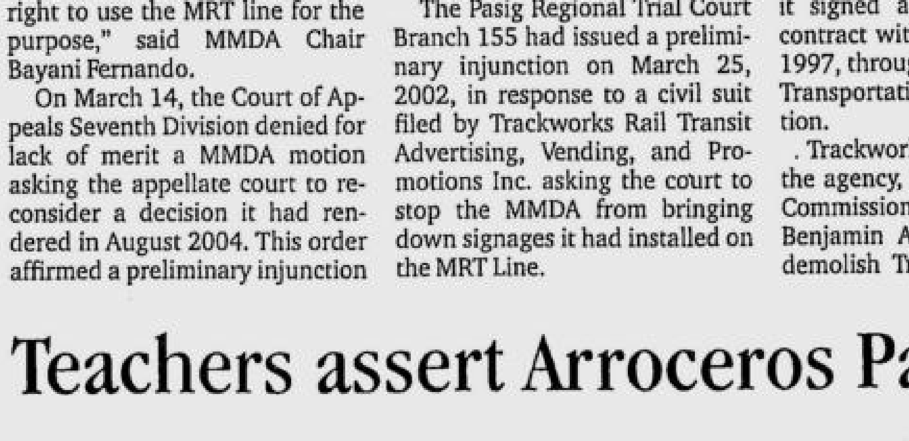
The property was bought through the city's special education fund, a fund put up solely for the use of the DCS.

Calling the foundation "a group of self-described caretakers of our property," Quinones said the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between the City of Manila and the foundation in November 1993 was never ratified by the City Council.

"If the critics want to imply that the rightful owners of the property cannot even set up anything on any portion of the land they own, then that, we believe, is very unreasonable," Quiñones said in a letter faxed to the INQUIRER.

"This is not to denigrate what they say they have done by way of putting up a park in a part of the area," she added. "But is it too much to expect that they respect as well the needs of the city school division's teachers and employees to enjoy the use of a part of the land owned by the DCS if only to provide them decent facilities they have long deserved?"

The school official also came to the defense of Mayor Lito Atienza, who gave the go-signal for the building the school division headquarters. "He should not be blamed for allocating funds for education-related projects," Quiñones said.



UPHS GRADUATION RITES

Commission on Higher Education Chair Fr. Rolando V. dela Rosa, OP, (center) is flanked by Dr. Daisy M. Tamayo (right) and Dr. Ramon C. Cercado (left), president and chancellor, respectively, of the University of Perpetual Help System-DALTA. Dela Rosa spoke at the 30th graduation exercises of UPHSD held reently at the Philippine International Convention Center.

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Exec hits street's closure

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna filed a complaint yesterday against the city engineer for closing and transforming a street in Sta. Mesa into a pedestrian walkway.

Lacuna is asking the Manila Regional Trial Court to issue a preliminary injunction and a temporary restraining order to stop Armand Andres from executing the plan to close Teresa Street to vehicular traffic.

Teresa, a two-way street and considered a main artery in Sta. Mesa, is being developed into a walkway as part of the city's beautification program.

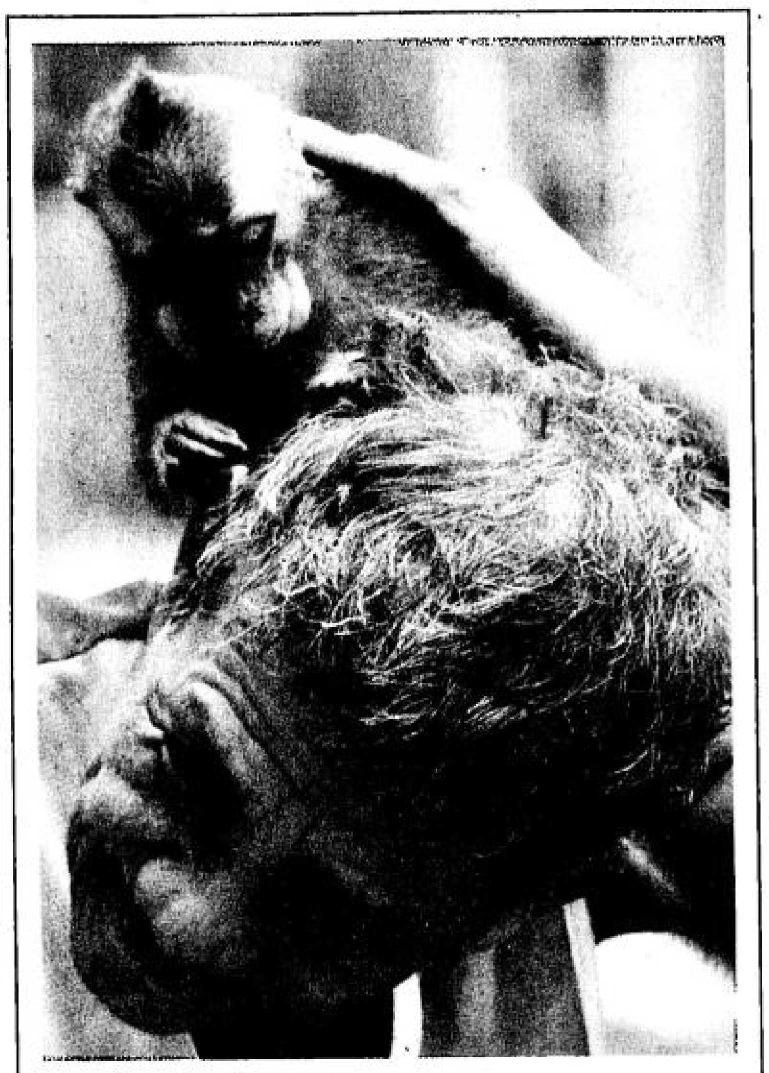
No council approval

Lacuna said in his petition that the project did not have the approval of the City Council.

Lacuna said the respondent's act of taking over the street without authority or consultation and public hearing was a violation of constitutional provisions.

"The project will produce misery and hardship to the motoring public who suffer the agonizing traffic congestion in the city. Between the project to beautify the area and to decongest the traffic situation in the area, the latter should first be addressed," he stressed.

Andres reportedly did not submit a project plan and failed to get an approval from the City Council, which has the power to convert city streets for other purposes.



USEFUL COMPANION
Simba, an eight-month-old monkey, looks for lice on the head of his caretaker, who seems to be enjoying his pet's chore. REUTERS

Credit card gives away Pinay in bank falsification case

By Margaux C. Ortiz

HER CREDIT card gave her away.

A bank official wanted for qualified theft through falsification of public documents in the Philippines was arrested while shopping at a department store in the United States last week.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) identified the suspect as Maria Teresita Zapanta, 49, of 22 Flora Ylagan St., BF Homes, Paranaque City.

According to NBI Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz, Zapanta left the country for Hong Kong on Sept. 23, 2004, after allegedly fabricating bank documents and amassing "millions of pesos."

"There are reports that she is an important bank official," Diaz said, adding that revealing the name of the establishment could cause a possible bank run.

Upon arriving in Hong Kong, Zapanta immediately flew to the United States using another passport.

Diaz said officials of the bank where Zapanta reportedly worked asked for the NBI's help in looking for her.

Traced in the US

The Interpol and the NBI Special Task Force then sought the Federal Bureau of Investigation's assistance in tracing Zapanta's whereabouts in the US, Diaz said.

"Zapanta was also considered an illegal alien because her visa expired last March 23," the Interpol chief explained, adding that Pasig Regional Trial Court Judge Celso Lavina had declared Zapanta a "fugitive from justice" and canceled her passport.

The FBI then confirmed that Zapanta was staying at 4323 Eagle Rock Boulevard, Los Angeles, California.

Zapanta was arrested by agents of the FBI and Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of Homeland Security on March 31, a few months after using her AIG credit card in a department store in Glendale, California.

Diaz said that after offering voluntary deportation, Zapanta was detained at the San Pedro Penal Institution.

"According to information relayed to the Interpol, Zapanta will be arriving in the country this week with two NBI agents," Diaz added.

NBI arrests alleged LTO 'fixer' for duping car buyer

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A MAN who claimed to be a "fixer" at the Land Transportation Office was arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents the other day in Manila after allegedly defrauding a car buyer.

Joselito Bailon, of Olongapo City, was nabbed inside SM Manila while reportedly receiving marked money from complainant Rowena Delfin.

The suspect's alleged accomplice, a certain Paul Chua, is at large, according to NBI Intelligence Special Operations Division (ISOD) chief Allan Contado.

NBI reports said Chua approached Delfin while she was looking for a car to buy in Subic, Olongapo City, in November.

When Delfin failed to find the car of her choice, Chua offered to help her before getting her cell phone number.

A week later, Chua sent a message to Delfin telling her that he had found the car and asked for P200,000 in payment.

Chua also introduced Bailon as the LTO employee in charge of the car's registration papers.

The suspects, however, failed to deliver the vehicle even after Delfin deposited the payment in Chua's bank account, the NBI report showed.

Delfin asked for NBI assistance when Bailon called her and asked for an additional P32,000 for registration fees.

Contado said charges of estafa and robbery/extortion would be filed against Bailon.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

BILLIARDS: San Miguel Asian 9 Ball Tour; 2 p.m. (r); STAR Sports - Take another look at quarterfinal pool action from Jakarta.

TENNIS: Nasdaq 100 Highlights; 11 a.m.; STAR Sports - Check out the best tennis moments from Florida.

BASKETBALL: NBA - Nuggets vs Grizzlies; 8 a.m. (r-7 p.m.); Sports Plus; Sonics vs Kings; 10 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports - Check out these pair of western matches.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV

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Oreta lifts Knights past Wizards

Welcoat overpowers newcomer Nenaco-San Beda in PBL Unity Cup

GAMES TOMORROW (Makati Coliseum)
2 p.m.—Bacchus vs Montaña
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Granny Goose

By Jasmine W. Payo

TOYOTA Otis-Letran, with Emerson Oreta drilling home a step-back jumper in the final 13.5 seconds, shocked Magnolia Ice Cream, 63-62, in the PBL Unity Cup yesterday at the Makati Coliseum.

"Magnolia is our barometer," said coach Louie Alas after the Knights posted their first win against the Wizards since 2004. "If we beat them, I know our confidence level will be high in this conference."

Mark Macapagal paced the Knights with 16 points, while Dennis Daa contributed 12 points and 8 rebounds. Oreta, who sparked Toyota Otis-Letran's rally in the last quarter, finished with 10 points.

Earlier, Welcoat-St. Benilde easily powered its way to a 92-63 victory over debuting Negros Navigation-San Beda.

Veteran forward Marvin Ortiguerra led the Paintmasters with 14 points. Jay-R Reyes chipped in 12 markers, while Ismael Junio added 11.

"They're just new so they're not yet used to the physicality of the game," said Welcoat coach Caloy Garcia.

Led by Ortiguerra and Jay-A Coching, the league veterans dealt Nenaco a rude welcome as they took an early 22-point advantage, 48-26.

The Paintmasters continued their aggressive charge in the second half, leading by as many as 32 points, 62-30.

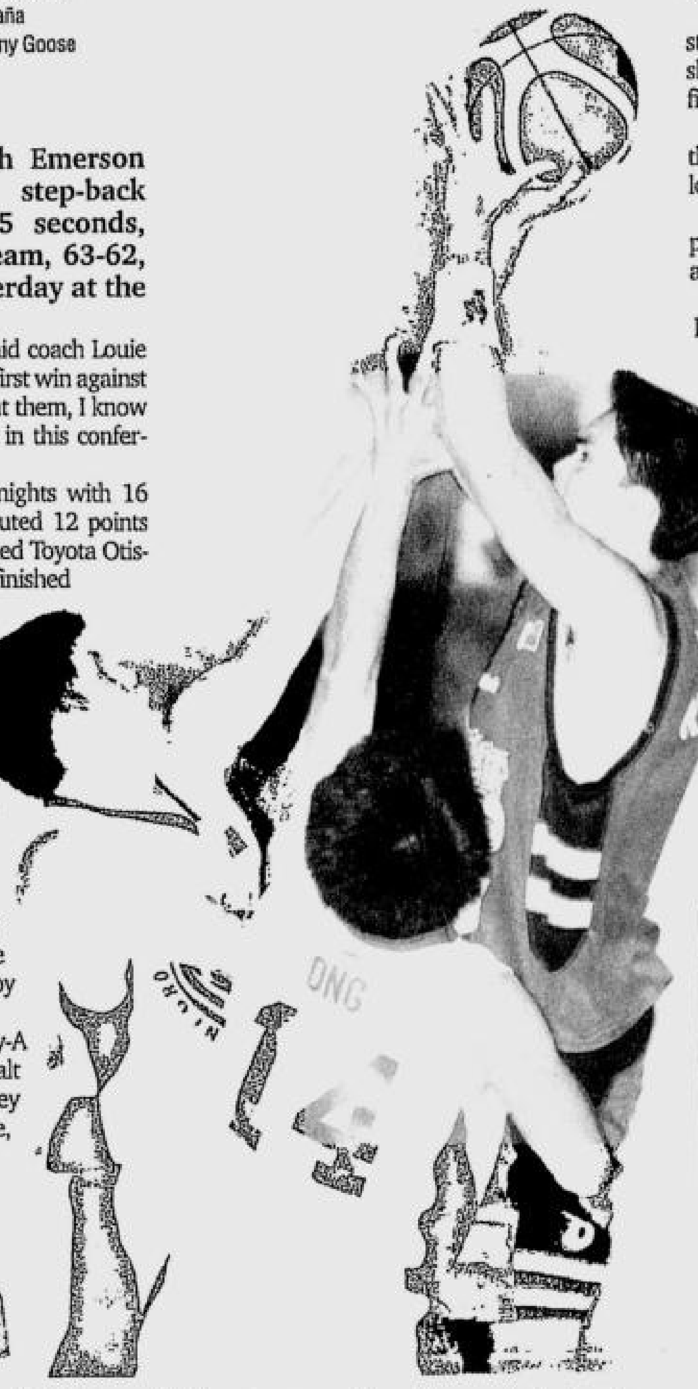
After a tight first half, 30-29, Dennis Daa and Ron Capati teamed up to lift the Knights to a 41-34 edge midway in the third period. Macapagal then took over to give the Knights their first double-digit lead, 47-36.

The Wizards, the 2004 Unity Cup champions, staged a comeback behind Arwind Santos, who shot back-to-back triples that cut the margin to five, 51-46.

Wizards' forward Neil Rañeses then opened the final period with a three-pointer, followed by a low-post basket to tie the game at 51-51.

Oreta, who shot six of his 10 points in the final period, kept the Knights within striking distance, and made the game's biggest basket after

Gerard Jones had lifted Magnolia to a 62-61 lead with 2:29 remaining.



JAY-R Reyes of Welcoat scores off two Nenaco defenders in yesterday's PBL game at the Makati Coliseum. RYAN LIM

The scores:

First Game

WELCOAT 92—Ortiguerra 14, Reyes 12, Junio 11, Coching 9, Sagad 8, Tan 7, Najorda 7, Sta. Maria 6, Guevarra 6, Dy 5, Washington 5, Estrada 2, Gamboa 0, Orbeta 0, Manding 0.

NENACO 63—Paterno 19, Aljamal 15, Cruz 11, Hudencial 7, Soriano 5, Timonera 2, Angeles 2, Baldivia 2, Arbole 0, De Guzman 0, Ong 0.

Quarters: 17-12, 48-26, 69-38, 92-63

Second Game

TOYOTA OTIS 63—Macapagal 16, Daa 12, Oreta 10, Capati 8, Larong 5, Coronel 3, Tajonera 2, Rodriguez 2, Alonzo 2, Tagupa 1, Andaya 2, Enrile 0.

MAGNOLIA 62—Santos 15, Jones 11, Rañeses 9, Misolas 9, Miranda 6, Calli 2, Isip 2, Rizada 2, Yabut 2, Co 2, Caceres 2, Williams 0, Chan 0.

Quarters: 15-12, 30-29, 51-48, 63-62

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Dayrit giving up top SEA Games council function

By Musong Castillo

DAYRIT

THE CAMP of Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday described the impending resignation of Celso Dayrit as head of the Southeast Asian Games Federation Council as a "gentlemanly act."

Cojuangco spokesman Joey Romasanta said the former Tarlac congressman has yet to talk to Dayrit personally but sees the gesture as a "gentlemanly act for Philippine sports."

Dayrit, who decided not to run in the last POC elections last year after heading the local Olympic body since 1999, is set to announce his resignation when the SEAGFC convenes for the final time on April 29. The council is to come up with the final schedule and number of events in each sport for the Games.

The SEAG is scheduled Nov. 27 to Dec. 5 in Manila and three other key cities.

Dayrit, also the incumbent chief of the fencing association, automatically became president of the SEAGFC as POC head when Vietnam officially turned the hosting job to the Philippines at the close of the 2003 Games.

He could elect to stay, but tradition dictates that the president of the national Olympic committee of the host country serves as the council president.

The SEAGFC, made up of various heads of all the SEAG member countries, decides on the number of events staked in each sport.

Though the host can influence the roster of events for the Games, the council is powerful enough to shoot down proposals which it deems as one-sided.

Several NSAs, including tennis, are asking for more events in their sports.

The Philippine Tennis Association, during a recent council meeting in Vietnam, had asked, through Rep. Monico Puentevella, that the old format of seven events be restored.

For the past several SEAGs, only four gold medals—the men's and ladies' singles and men's and ladies' doubles—have been staked.

But after signing up Fil-Ams Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino, who are legitimate ATP players with world rankings, the Philta is looking at winning four gold medals in the men's division alone.

Should the council vote in favor of the Philippines, team competitions in both divisions will be added as well as a mixed doubles championship.

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Vanus Sarmiento, Laguna — Magic Sing
Eduardo Reyes, Bataan — 1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Jeffrey Dy, Pangasinan — 1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Arron Tudtod, Malaybalay City — 1 Carton of 1L Petron REV-X
Luz D. Llanza, Albay — 1 Carton of 1L Petron REV-X
Draw Date : Feb. 16, 2005
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Reynante Good, Muntinlupa City — Samsung V50 Digital Camera
Virginia Samson, Camarines Norte — Samsung HD 748 DVD Player
Anthony A. Sulco, Cebu City — Magic Sing
Isidro Dolor, Capiz — 1 Carton of 1L Petron Touring
Leo Baler, Laguna — Carton of 1L Petron Touring
[illegible] Rim, La Union — 1 Carton of 1L Petron REV-X
[illegible] Bohol — 1 [illegible] of 1L Petron REV-X
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New swim board set to tackle SEA Games buildup

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WITH the Southeast Asian Games preparations on top of the agenda, the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (Pasa) will hold a general meeting this weekend in Bacolod City under the new leadership recently recognized by the Philippine Olympic Committee.

What the country can expect from the swimmers in the November SEA Games and the Pasa's assessment of the facilities in Los Baños, Laguna, will be tackled in the meeting, according to Pasa president Mark Joseph.

The meeting will coincide with the sixth national age group swimming championships where more than 300 tankers are expected to see action.

From the competition results, the composition and ranking of the national junior team will be known, said Joseph. The RP squad will later compete in the 29th age group tilt to be held in Brunei on June 3-5.

Joseph has been recognized as successor to Chito Ilagan by the POC following the recommendation of an arbitration committee.

The other new officials are Olympians Akiko Thomson as secretary general, Ral Rosario as national training director and Pinky Brosas as board member.

"This is our first board meeting since our elections last Sept. 11 in Cebu City," said Joseph, who also included in the agenda a four-year strategic plan "seeking to reorganize Pasa in four key management areas."

Joseph said he would put emphasis on corporate governance in the Pasa, enhance high performance of elite athletes, hold competitions to boost the technical skills and development of amateur aquatic sports including swimming, water polo, diving and synchronized diving.

Pasa is hoping to surpass its three-gold medal performance two years ago in Vietnam. The Philippines, powered by icons Eric Buhain and Thomson, won nine gold medals when the SEAG was last held here in 1991.

Shell seeks solo lead vs Red Bull

AFTER coming up with two straight 40-point performances, Wesley Wilson of Shell has become the yardstick of imports in the 2005 Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference.

And it's worth watching how Red Bull's Dalron Johnson would fare against Wilson when the Barako face the Turbochargers at 4:45 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We have to come up with something against him (Wilson)," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, whose Barako recently downed the Sta. Lucia Realtors to improve to 3-2 in the company of Talk 'N Text and Barangay Ginebra.

"He's a great import and we can't take him for granted," added Guiao.

Wilson shot a conference-high 46 points against Coca-Cola and followed it up with a 40-point game against San Miguel Beer as the Turbochargers bounced back after going down to Alaska before the Holy Week break.

In the other game, the Realtors try to end a long victory when they face at 7:35 p.m. the Barangay Ginebra Kings, who will come in fresh from an out-of-town conquest of the FedEx Express.

Aside from Wilson's heads-up plays, the Turbochargers have also been getting added firepower from Rich Alvarez, Ronald Tubid, Tony Dela Cruz, Roger Yap and Christian Calaguio lately.

"Wesley's skill and aggressiveness have rubbed off on his teammates," said Shell coach Leo Austria.

"What's good about our team is that even though we have a high-scoring import, the locals don't rely heavily on Wilson. They make sure they share the burden with him," added Austria.

As a result, the Turbochargers (4-2) are tied with the Beermen and the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs at the top of the standings.

" We win games because of scouting," said Austria. "Everybody knows Red Bull is a changed team and again, scouting the enemy will be crucial for us."

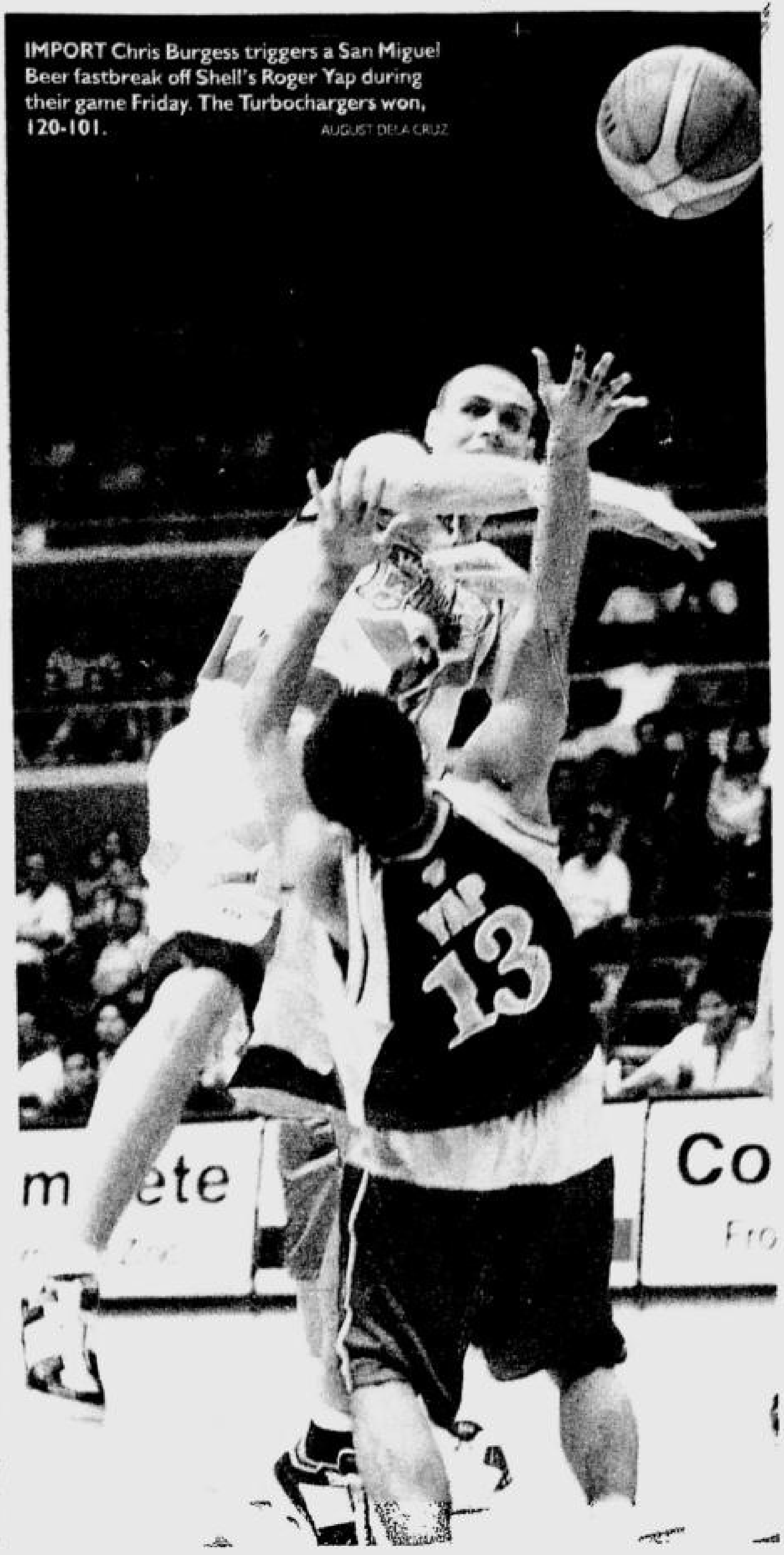
After dropping four straight games, the last one against the Barako, the Realtors (1-5) have recruited ex-Ginebra import Ryan Fletcher to replace Raheim "The Dream" Brown.

Dubbed as "The Great White Hope," Fletcher meets his former team and sizes up Eddie Elisma in the import matchup. The 6-foot-7 Fletcher played for the Gin Kings in the 2000 and 2001 seasons.

June Navarro

STANDINGS	W	L
San Miguel	4	2
Shell	4	2
Purefoods	4	2
Ginebra	3	2
Talk N Text	3	2
Red Bull	3	2
FedEx	2	3
Alaska	2	4
Coca-Cola	2	4
Sta. Lucia	1	5

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:45 p.m.—Shell vs Red Bull
7:35 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Barangay Ginebra



IMPORT Chris Burgess triggers a San Miguel Beer fastbreak off Shell's Roger Yap during their game Friday. The Turbochargers won, 120-101.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Ex-Hoya impressed by Pinoys' cage savvy

FORMER Georgetown University stalwart Courtland Freeman shares the same view with past American cage stars who had been to the Philippines.

Filipinos are indeed, knowledgeable in terms of basketball.

"They (Filipinos) are very skillful. That's why I'm very excited to be here," said Freeman during the PSA Forum yesterday at the Manila Pavilion.

In town for a weeklong cage clinic under the Cultural Envoy Program, Freeman said he has yet to see people as passionate as the Filipinos are to the game of basketball in his less than a year of stint with the globe-trotting group.

Freeman joined the program shortly after his stint with the Hoyas, the same school that produced such NBA greats as Patrick Ewing, Allen Iverson, Alonzo Mourning, Dikembe Mutombo and legendary coach John Thompson.

Omari Faulkner, a college teammate of Freeman with the Hoyas from 2000-04, is also helping out in the clinic focused on using basketball to illustrate some of the positive aspects of American culture including teamwork, free expression and hard work.

Ironically, Shell import Wesley Wilson also played alongside Faulkner and Freeman at Georgetown.

"We're happy to see that he (Wilson) found his place here," said Brian Sexton, senior advisor on cultural program at the State Department, who accompanied Freeman to the forum along with Rebekah Drame, department cultural attaché, and Ruth Urry, department press attaché.

ABC-5 puts up cash prizes for sportswriting tilt

ABC 5, the country's fastest growing television network, is backing the annual PBA Press Corps Sportswriting Contest set April 17 at the Araneta Coliseum.

ABC 5 will provide the cash prizes and plaques for the top three winners of the contest also supported by PBA Commissioner's Office, San Miguel Beer, Alaska and Red Bull.

The winner will receive P5,000 plus a plaque and gift packs, while the second and third placers will pocket P3,000 and P2,000, respectively.

Registration is ongoing. For inquiries, call the PBA Office at 638-1815 to 17 and look for Hazel Ancheta or Diorela Ambrosio. Deadline is on April 8.

JAVI Benitez (center) with Jet Racing teammate Tomas Cabili and third placer Gabby Borja (right).

Benitez rallies to top Shell karting

JAVI Benitez of Jet Racing Team displayed grit and excellent technique to rule the Cadet 60 Expert class in the second leg of the 2005 Shell Helix Superkarting Series at the Boom Na Boom Kart Trak of the CCP Complex on Roxas Boulevard recently.

The victory was sweet for the 10-year-old Benitez, who worked his way up from fourth place in the first heat and pulled in front to stay with two laps to go.

Bucking an arm injury that forced him to miss the series' kickoff leg last month, Benitez finished with a time of 16:06.152 minutes in the 22-lap race. He also posted the fastest lap time of 35.379 seconds.

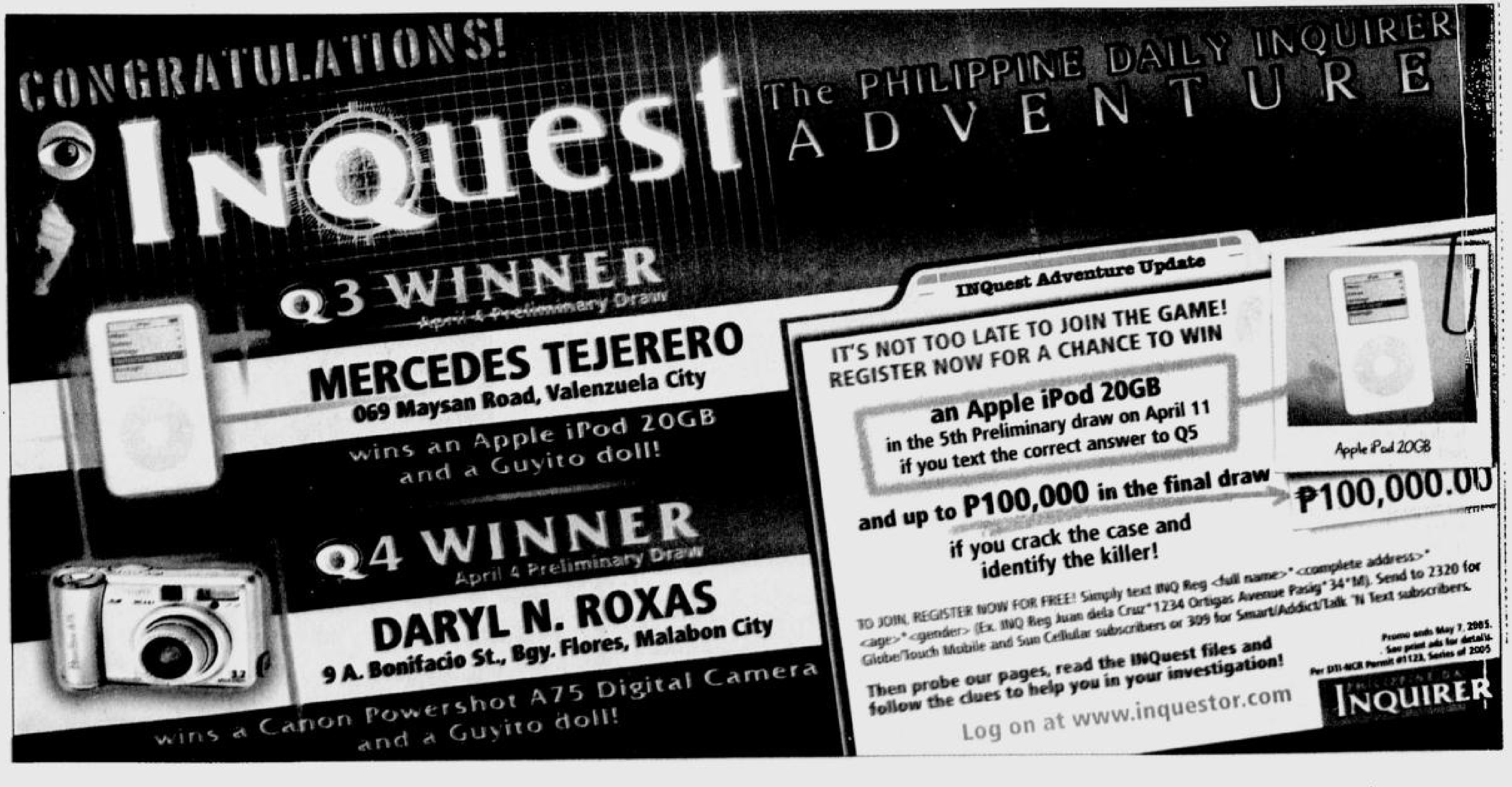
"It feels really good to win," said the son of Bingo Bonanza executive Albee Benitez. "I have a lot of catching up to do because I missed the first race."

Teammate Tomas Cabili made it a 1-2 finish for the Bingo Bonanza Corp.-backed Jet Racing Team. Cabili timed 16:14.634.

The team's new coach, Elson Carpio, a former motocross rider, praised Benitez's performance.

"He's more determined this time," said Carpio of his ward. "He's quick to learn how to negotiate the curves and make correct judgment during the race. But I was really surprised to see him go this fast and consistent throughout the race."

Jet Racing is also supported by Henry Sy Jr. of SM Companies and Willy Ocier of Pacific Online Systems Corp. and Belle Corp.



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Pacquiao PPV share 'secure' under Ali Act

UNDER the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, chances are great Manny Pacquiao would still get his share from the pay-per-view earnings of his recent fight with Erik Morales.

And such a law is needed in the country to protect the welfare of local fighters according to Hermie Rivera, a former sportscaster who discovered and later managed former two-time world boxing champion Luisito Espinosa.

"Pacquiao has a good chance to recover his share in the pay-per-view fight with Erik Morales," said Rivera during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion. "But Manny is already a millionaire. What we should pity are the other Filipino boxers who have not been rightfully paid for their fights."

He cited the cases of the now US-based Espinosa and reigning Orient Pacific Boxing Federation (OPBF) titlist Rodel Mayol.

Between the two, Espinosa has suffered the most.

The 37-year old former Tondo boy has yet to collect his purse amounting to $130,000 for his successful defense of his World Boxing Council (WBC) featherweight title against Carlos Rios of Argentina in Koronadal, Cotabato eight years ago.

PACQUIAO with promoter Murad Muhamad

The case is now in court with the ageing Espinosa, currently based in Los Angeles where he continues to box for a living, being represented only by his lawyer Dennis Almasan.

"We need the immediate enactment of a law like the Ali Reform Act that would protect our boxers," said Rivera in the sports program sponsored by Red Bull, Supermax, Circure and Pagcor.

Citing a provision in section 10 of the Ali Act, Rivera said the Pacquiao does have a good case in his court battle against US promoter Murad Muhammad, who pocketed about $2 million of Pacquiao's PPV share in the Morales bout.

In essence, the Ali Act stresses that a promoter is not entitled to receive any compensation for a boxing match until he discloses to the boxer the 1) amount he'll receive, 2) all fees, charges and expenses that will be assessed by him pertaining to the match, including any portion of the boxer's purse that the promoter will receive, and training expenses, and 3) any reduction in a boxer's purse contrary to a previous agreement between promoter and boxer.

Pacquiao became the first Filipino fighter to be featured in the main event of a pay-per-view bout opposite the 28-year-old Morales in their blockbuster 12-round match at the MGM Grand Garden Hotel in Las Vegas two weeks ago.

He did end up with a purse amounting to $1.75 million, but didn't get a single centavo from the pay-per-view shares as what had been stipulated in the contract he signed with Muhammad.

Mayol keeps ring streak, OPBF title

RODEL Mayol kept his unbeaten record and his Oriental and Pacific Boxing Federation minimumweight crown with a unanimous decision win over a veteran Takayuki Korogi at the Central Gym in Osaka, Japan Monday.

The Mandaue-raised Mayol raised his winning streak to 21. He could not put the Japanese away inside the distance although he managed to deck his durable rival in the ninth round.

Japanese boxing journalist Joe Koizumi, in his report, said the World Boxing Council No. 2 ranked Mayol "swept all rounds and dropped ex-Japanese champ Takayuki Korogi in the ninth to retain his belt by a lopsided decision over twelve rounds."

Scoring referee Bill Clancy of Las Vegas, Bruce McTavish (Philippines) and Hiroyoshi Yasuda (Japan) all saw it 120-107, in favor of Mayol, who defended his title for the third time.

Koizumi, however, noted that "Mayol wasn't so impressive as people had expected an easier victory."

In the supporting bout, WBC No. 8 Arman De la Cruz of the Philippines lost by unanimous decision to Japanese Ken Nakajima.

The three judges had Nakajima winner by scores of 98-92, 97-93 and 96-94. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Manny must grow up

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

A BIG fight often results in a big change in a fighter.

Whether this is for the good or the better depends on the fighter himself.

It was not exaggerated what experts said that both Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier had spent half of their original gifts after the galactic Thrilla in Manila.

They were never the same again after that Big Bang at the Big Dome on Oct. 1,1975.

The Greatest won by technical knockout in the 14th round, but the Ali we were to see in subsequent fights was no longer as sharp, golden as the original that blazed the world with his ring skills and poetic wit.

So how much did Manny Pacquiao lose in his classic encounter with Mexican legend Erik Morales at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas last month?

Maybe little, maybe much.

There's no way we could aptly measure the deterioration now.

The fighting heart, the flamboyance are still very evident in the knockout artist from GenSan who himself had to run in order to avoid being knocked out.

***

It's hard to say. But the discovery that he had to turn back, instead of going to his original rat-tat-tat devil-may-care way, in order to survive could be part of the changed Pacquiao.

What's truly evident, though, is that Pacquiao has lost a bundle to his US promoter, Murad Muhammad, who took the bag and ran away with the pay-per-view profits that rightfully belonged to the RP boxing idol.

How his local handlers, supposedly wise to the ways of the prizefight underworld, had allowed Pacquiao to be robbed neat smacks of a grand conspiracy.

There was no full disclosure of the perks that went with the actual purse, a clear violation of the Muhammad Ali Act normally followed in professional boxing bouts in the United States.

OK, Pacquiao lost big money after he got giddy and was blinded by the $1.75 million purse foxily dangled by Murad.

But there could be another setback Pacquiao had suffered.

***

He could've ended up a "damaged good" after the all-revealing Morales encounter.

This observation was offered by Puerto Rican cutman Leny de Jesus, who worked Pacquiao's corner at the MGM Grand Arena last month.

By that, De Jesus, who has worked more world title bouts than trainer Freddie Roach, clearly meant Pacquiao is no longer "as good as the original."

De Jesus said he sensed a clear inner fracture, not plain ferment.

Well, at least we continue to receive joyful reports from the Pacquiao camp, like how he had won in a cockfight derby in Pasay over the weekend.

Pacquiao could be painting the town red based on sightings of the celebrated fighter in pool parlors and cockfight arenas.

He's entitled to unbridled freedom after having labored hard for nearly three months while preparing for the Morales fight.

But he obviously went overboard when he came home early morning Saturday and refused to honor his commitment with a senior journalist who deserves highest respect.

***

The news of Pacquiao standing up Star columnist Teddy Benigno, the original Cory Aquino Press secretary who was in the forefront of the anti-Marcos fight, came with the impact of a knockout.

But it was a dirty blow, below the belt, no matter how you looked at it.

For one, it was Pacquiao who had set the interview: 9 a.m. in his BF Parañaque residence last Friday.

Benigno, ever the tested warrior, was at the Pacquiao doorstep at the appointed hour.

But Pacquiao, who came home at 5 a.m. that day remained solemnly locked inside his air-conditioned room.

Househelp and security told Benigno he could try his luck and wait until noon, when Pacquiao might decide to get up.

Benigno left without a word.

***

Wrote the celebrated and respected columnist on Monday: "Not in all the many years I have been a journalist have I waited for even a president of the Philippines that long… I figured my time was just as important as his time and if he couldn't make it on time, he owed me an apology."

Well, the sorry thing is that Benigno, who has scored more significant knockouts than Pacquiao in his own field, has received no apology.

No note, no call. It's said that Pacquiao had made even the President wait long when they were doing an election commercial last year.

Well, for Pacquiao's information, Benigno went to his place in a bid to "rid him of the leeches bleeding him dry."

Knowing Benigno, whom we have admired and looked up to since our college days, Pacquiao could've gotten some points on poise and integrity from the former guerilla and street fighter.

Benigno could've been of great help, more than all the politicians of all weight categories pretending to support Pacquiao but who clearly ride on his fame.

For the record, Benigno did not solicit support in reporting the unsavory incident.

If there's one who needed sympathy, it was not Teddy Benigno, the man, it was the childish Manny Pacquiao.

De Dios, Patrimonio advance

TOP SEED Kariz de Dios and No. 2 Christine Patrimonio came through with contrasting victories yesterday to lead early winners in the girls' 14-and-under class, while John Francis Largo shocked boys' 16-and-under top pick Russell Arcilla in the 2005 Tru-Flex National Age-Group Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. De Dios struggled in the first set before ousting Samantha Coyiuto, 7-5, 61, while Patrimonio, of the three tennis-playing children of former PBA superstar Alvin, routed Krestil Buenacosa, 6-0, 61. The twin wins came before Largo outdueled Arcilla, 7-6, 6-3. Sharing the day's honors were girls' 12 and under third seed Alyssa Mendoza, No. 4 Regina Santiago, fifth pick Judy Em Botor, July Javelosa and Clarice Patrimonio. Mendoza beat Louise Lopez, who failed to show up for their match, by default; Santiago thumped Joan Therese Opulencia, 63, 6-0; Botor bumped off Kara Bugal, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; Javelosa downed Rebecca Fabregas, 6-1, 6-2; and Clarice won over Irina Quinatadcan via walkover.

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TAR Heel Jawad Williams celebrates with a supporter after North Carolina's victory. AP

Star performers look forward to NBA draft

ST. LOUIS—The 2005 NCAA men's basketball championships may already be consigned to history, but the careers of some of its star performers are only just beginning.

The North Carolina Tar Heels gave coach Roy Williams his first national title on Monday, downing the Illinois Illini, 75-70, in the championship game, bringing an end to 'March Madness,' which now carries into the first weekend in April.

The focus of college basketball fans now turns toward June's NBA draft and which players from the NCAA tournament are likely to hear their names called on draft day.

While performance in the tournament is not considered vital to a player's possible draft selection, a really good run at the Final Four—or a really bad one for that matter—might tip the scales one way or the other.

"A good or a bad tournament might help or hinder your draft position, but really these guys have been watched all year," Chris Monter of College Basketball News said.

"A team isn't going to make a decision based on one bad game or even a bad tournament.

"That said, a great Final Four certainly can't hurt a player either." Marvin Williams certainly did not harm his cause.

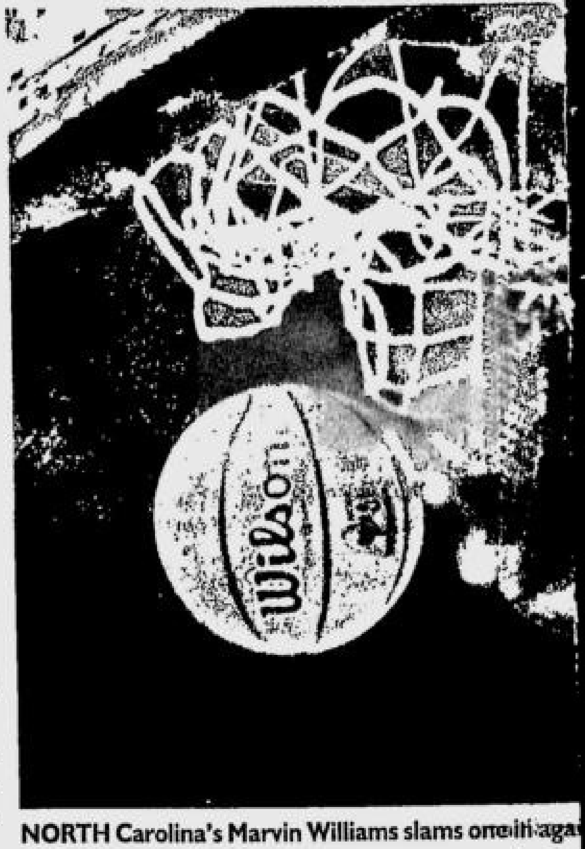
Williams came off the bench to tip in the winning basket in the championship game win and his poise under pressure will only improve his stock, which was already pretty high coming in.

He was already considered a certain lottery pick before the tournament, but might even go first overall or certainly in the top three come draft day after adding national champion to his basketball resumé.

A 6-foot-9 freshman, Williams is already known as a team player who can compete under boards and has decent scoring touch.

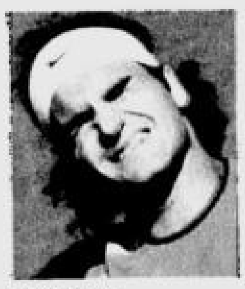
His North Carolina team mate Rashad McCants is considered one of the top offensive players in the country.

Nobody questions his scoring ability, but the 6-foot-4 junior is considered a bit of a discipline problem. Reuters



NORTH Carolina's Marvin Williams slams one

Federer benefits from win



FEDERER

LONDON—Roger Federer accomplished something at the Nasdaq-100 Open he had not done for almost four years when he won a match from two sets down.

The Swiss master usually bamboozles his opponents from the moment he steps on court but Spanish teenager Rafael Nadal made a blistering start to Sunday's final.

It was not that Federer was playing badly in what turned out to be a thrilling contest, just that he ran into an inspired Nadal, who went into the biggest match of his burgeoning career on a 15-match winning streak.

For a man who had tasted defeat just once in eight months, Federer was on unfamiliar territory as he lost the opening two sets.

The world number one had to dig deep into his memory bank as the last time he overcame a two-set deficit was in the 2001 French Open, when Armenia's Sargis Sargsian took him to 9-7 in the fifth set of a second-round match.

Federer was two points from defeat in the third-set tiebreaker against Nadal but he found his way out of trouble to win, 2-6, 6-7, 7-6, 6-3, 6-1. *Reuters*

Only graft raps for Dilag, says Dagan lawyer

THE ISSUE is graft and malversation of public funds and not anything else.

The lawyer of Klub Don Juan de Manila director and Marho member William C. Dagan reminded Philracom chair Jaime Dilag and his six other co-accused yesterday that only the charges of graft and malversation are in the 12-page complaint sheet supported by 89 pages of official evidence-documents submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Lawyer Nap Malimas also reminded the respondents that the questioned Philracom checks, vouchers, purchase requests and receipts are official and binding agency documents, and were mostly supplied by disgruntled Philracom employees.

For his part, Dagan laughed off Dilag's claim of "personal attack" against Philracom officials in reacting to the filing of the charges, saying graft and malversation are far too serious charges to be based on personalities alone.

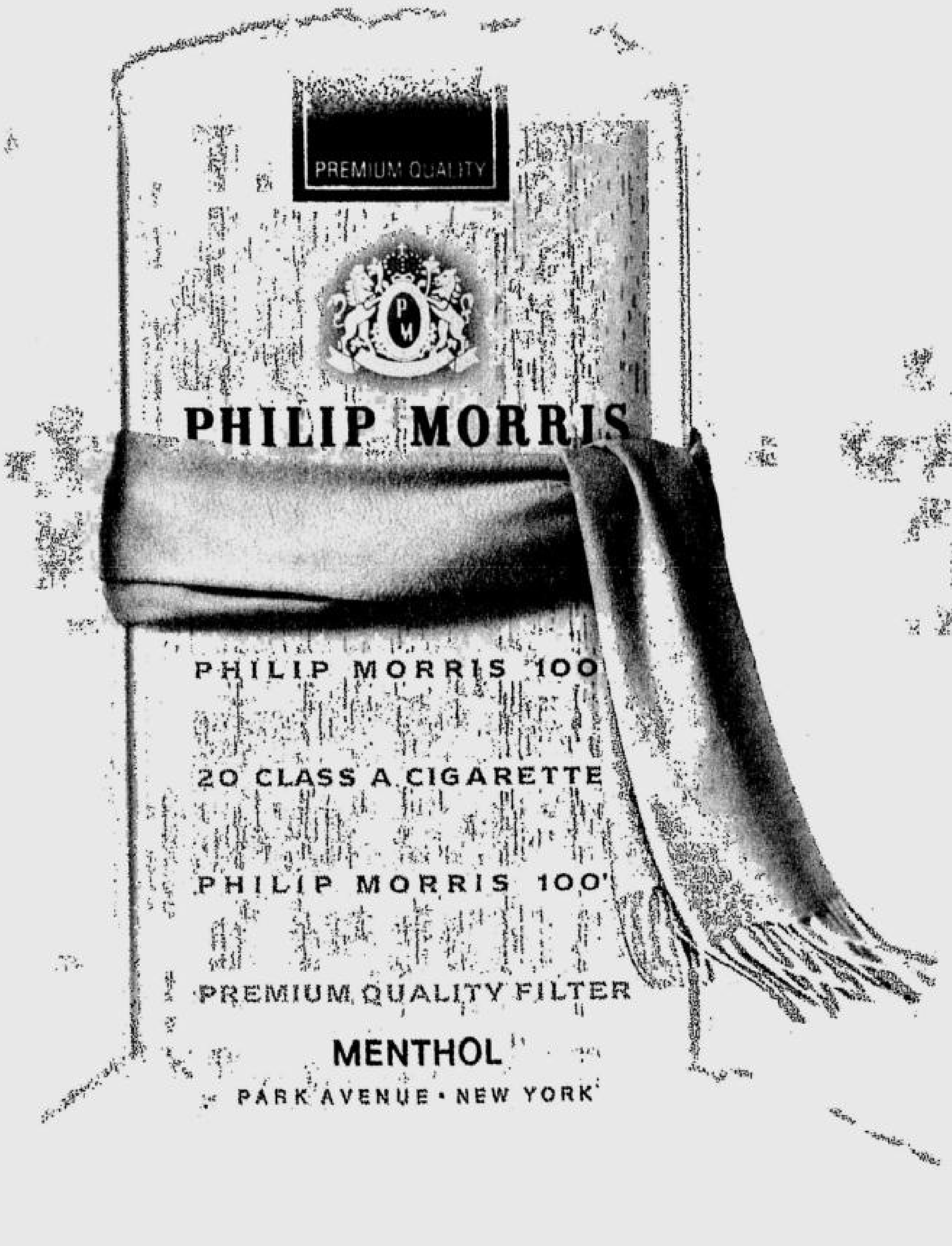
Filed charges

Last Wednesday, Dagan filed charges against Dilag, commissioners Eduardo Jose, Rogelio Tandiama, Reynaldo Fernando, Vergel Cruz and Eduardo Domingo Jr. and assistant director Romeo Buencamino for violating RA 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, RA 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for public officials, and Articles 217 and 220 of the Revised Penal Code on Malversation and Illegal Use of Public Funds.

Dagan urged Dilag and his co-accused to explain, among others, the alleged overpayment of P28.6 million by the Philracom to racing clubs San Lazaro and Santa Ana through a devious scheme, his reimbursement of personal medicines which was entered in the books as "promotional expenses," the P180,000 spent by Dilag for promotion in a span of 30 days, the status of the alleged missing prizes of the day, and why Dilag hired a private PR firm at P100,000 a month when it is not allowed.

"Gathering the documents presented as evidence was a long and tedious process. We are thankful to the many who came out to provide us with them," Dagan said.

Also alleged was Jose's ownership of at least 11 horses, under the name of his son-in-law Mark Lloyd Santiago, which Dagan said was a clear violation of the law on conflict of interest.



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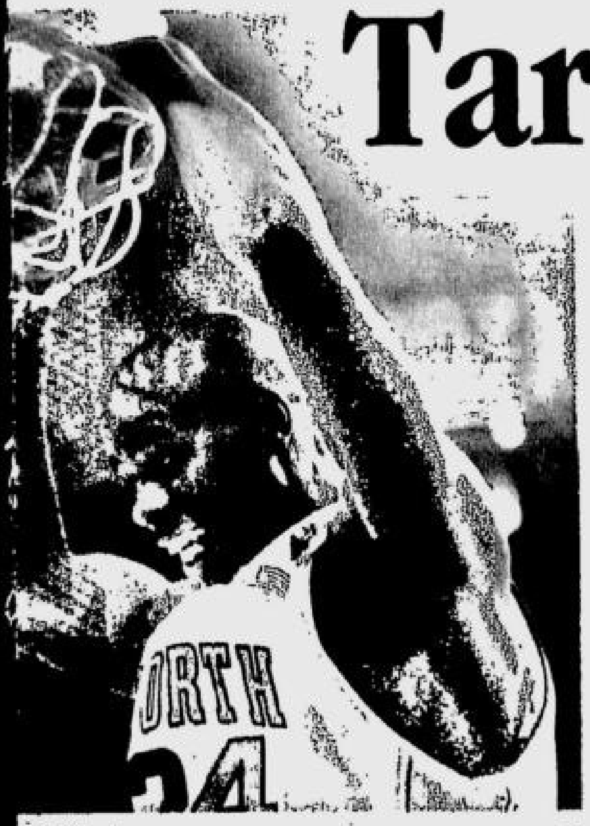
Tar Heels clinch NCAA title


nst Illinois. AP

ST. LOUIS—Sean May scored 26 points to lead the North Carolina Tar Heels to the NCAA men's basketball championship with a thrilling 75-70 win over the Illinois Illini on Monday.

Raymond Felton added 17 points, including three free throws in the final minute, and Rashad McCants had 14 points for the Tar Heels, who gave Roy Williams his first national title in his 17th season as a college coach, his second with his alma mater.

"We went out there and won it as a team," a tearful Williams said. "Our guys stood up and made the big shots.

"I'm just so happy for myself, my family and these seniors.

They took me for a heck of a ride.

"What this was a victory for North Carolina's team."

Illinois (37-2) was denied its record-setting 38th win of the season and its first NCAA title in its 100-year history while the Tar Heels won their fourth national championship and first since 1993.

"They played with more urgency," Illinois coach Bruce Weber said.

"We had some chances down the stretch, just couldn't get it done.

"It's a tremendous game, one and two, we lived up to it.

But I also feel great about our guys."

Marvin Williams' tip-in with 1:27 left broke a 70-70 tie and gave the Tar Heels (33-4) the win in the thrilling game, which was tied twice in the final five minutes.

May added 10 rebounds and was an impressive 10-for-11 from the field as he celebrated his 21st birthday in style.

"I'll never forget this until the day I die," May said. "It's the best moment I've had in my whole life."

The highly anticipated showdown between the two top-ranked teams in the nation—the first time the top two teams have met in the NCAA championship game in 30 years—lived up to expectations in the early going, with the teams exchanging leads four times in the first nine minutes.

However, the Tar Heels took over later in the first half, finishing on a 13-2 run to lead 40-27 at the intermission.

Illinois shot just 27 percent in the first half, while North Carolina was 55 percent from the field, with McCants scoring 14 first half points on 6-for-12 shooting.

The Illini fell behind by as many as 15 points early in the second half, but Illinois found its shooting groove and closed to within 52-50. *Reuters*

REUTERS

COACH Roy Williams cuts down the net after winning the 2005 NCAA men's crown.

Spurs get Robinson

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—The San Antonio Spurs signed All-Star forward Glenn 'Big Dog' Robinson on Monday. As per team policy, terms of the deal were not released.

In a related move, the Spurs waived Dion Glover.

Robinson, who was the No. 1 overall pick in the 1994 Draft out of Purdue, has posted career averages of 20.8 points and 6.1 rebounds per game. He has been selected to two All-Star teams, but spent the entire 2004-05 season on the injured list before being waived by New Orleans in early March.

Robinson began the season with the Philadelphia 76ers before being traded to New Orleans in exchange for Jamal Mashburn and Rodney Rogers.

As for Glover, he signed his second 10-day contract on March 30 and appeared in seven games for San Antonio. He averaged 3.6 points and 1.6 rebounds in 9.7 minutes. *Reuters*

Ex-NBA star Kemp jailed

SEATTLE—Former NBA star Shawn Kemp and another man were arrested early Monday after officers found what appeared to be marijuana and cocaine in a pickup truck owned by one of the men, authorities said.

Kemp was being held for investigation of drug possession and is due in court Tuesday, King County Jail spokesman Troy Bacon said.

The county sheriff's office said the arrest happened in suburban Shoreline after an officer smelled marijuana while talking to two men standing by a pickup in a parking lot. *AP*

Marave takes another crack at AF3 crown

PEPON Marave is no spring chicken at 39.

But he is confident he can still give the young guns in this year's Asian Formula 3 circuit a tough run for their money and even win the overall crown.

The veteran Marave yesterday said he is out to become the first rider in the circuit to win the championship for the second time, having won the overall crown in 2003.

"My main goal this year is to become the first two-time champion of the AF3 series. The feat will be a lot sweeter," said Marave, who will drive the car that powered him to the crown when the 2005 AF3 season gets going this weekend at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Marave concentrated on managing his Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO team last year, lending his race car to John O'Hara of Ireland, who drove it to second overall behind Christian Jones of Australia.

He admitted, however, that the road to the podium is bumpier this time, with the young guns proving quicker in recent practice runs at the 3.4-kilometer BRC track.

The three-time Formula Toyota Cup champ in the '90s said he would need to dig deep into his driving experience to again win the event backed by Addict Mobile, Motolite, Boysen, Yokohama Tires, Lima City Hotel and PLDT MyPad (www.pldtmypad). Media partners are Magic 89.9, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite.

Leading the horde of young drivers is Aussie Christian Jones, who is coming off a fourth-place finish in the Australian F3 Championship, Macau native Rodolfo Avila, Irish John O'Hara, and Filipinos Tyson Sy and Dado Peña.

AF3 Corp. chair Ed Peña said he expects this year's circuit to serve as a catalyst in fulfilling the racers' passion for the sport.

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Weather, water affect Masters

AUGUSTA, Georgia—This week's US Masters, which has already experienced a bizarre lead-in because of the weather, could end up being dominated by a water hazard more treacherous than the infamous Rae's Creek.

Many a Masters contender has found a watery grave at Rae's Creek on either the par-three 12th or the par-five 13th but rainfall might play a much more significant role before the 2005 champion is decided on Sunday.

Although the par-72 Augusta National layout was running remarkably firm and fast on Monday, the rain that has played havoc with this season's PGA Tour was expected to move in on Thursday and Friday.

Eight of the 14 events already completed on the 2005 tour have been severely hit by rain, with last week's BellSouth Classic the most recent to succumb.

The event, despite being reduced to three rounds, was forced into a fifth day on Monday before US Masters champion Phil Mickelson eventually clinched the title at the fourth extra hole.

Although the American left-hander was a conspicuous absentee at Augusta as he went about winning the 26th PGA Tour victory of his career at the TPC at Sugarloaf in Duluth, Georgia, he was not at all concerned.

"I was scheduled to take the day off (at Augusta), anyway," Mickelson told reporters after edging out Rich Beem for the title.

"I don't have but one practice round scheduled this week (for the Masters). I've done all my work and preparation on the golf course so I don't have to look forward." He intends to adopt the same game plan of power combined with control at Augusta, just as he did so successfully a year ago.

"That was the strategy and that will be the strategy this year," he added. "Fortunately, Augusta National sets up perfectly for right-to-left shots."

While the triumphant Mickelson arrived in Augusta late on Monday, the other members of the so-called "Fab Four" had all played practice rounds there earlier in the day.

World number one Vijay Singh, second-ranked Tiger Woods and number three Ernie Els made the most of blue skies and bright sunshine as around 40,000 spectators swarmed the heavily contoured, 7,290-yard course.

Many of the players had never seen the layout in such slick condition so early in a Masters week.

"I hope they put a little water on them because the greens are pretty fast for a Monday," said Australia's Adam Scott.

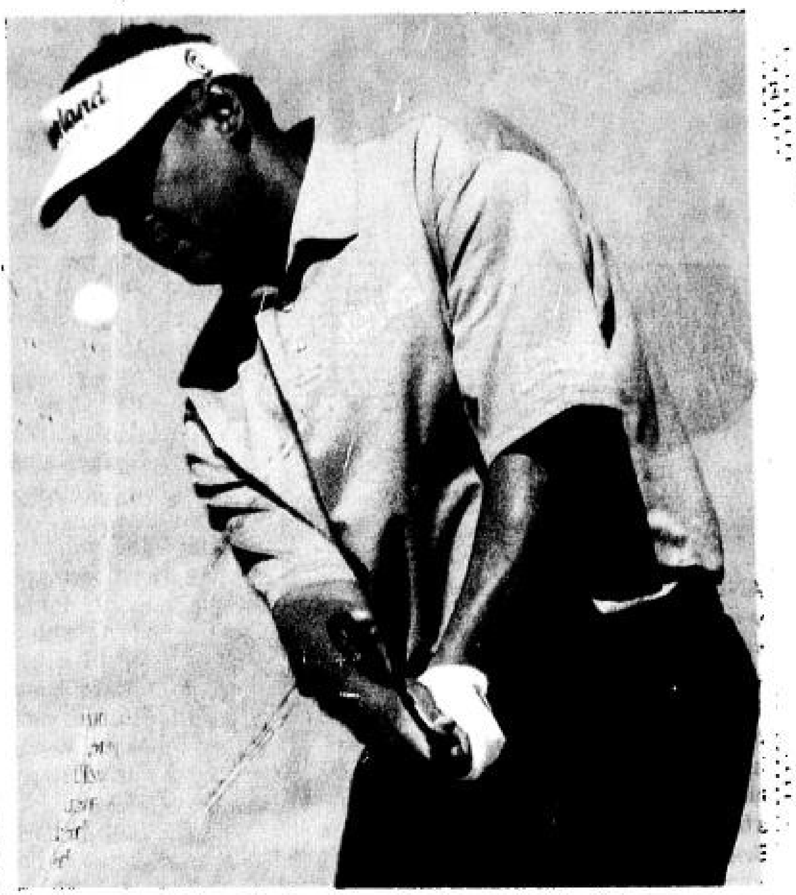
"They've been like this earlier in the week at previous Masters, but we've always been saved by the rain," added Scott, who clinched the biggest title of his career at last year's Players Championship, an event widely regarded as the sport's unofficial fifth major.

Augusta National, which was controversially extended by 285 yards for the 2002 US Masters, has not played fast and firm since then with rain falling on at least one day for each of the last three editions.

This week, thunderstorms and scattered showers have been forecast for the tournament's first two rounds—on Thursday and Friday.

Although Masters officials will be keeping at least one eye on the weather this week, they received a welcome boost on Monday when six-times champion Jack Nicklaus decided he would tee off in Thursday's opening round.

The golfing great, who won the last of his six green jackets in 1986 at the age of 46, had been in two minds about playing following the death last month of his 17-month old grandson. *Reuters*



WORLD No. 1 Vijay Singh watches his shot on the 2nd fairway. AP

Another stint for Nicklaus

AUGUSTA, Ga.— Jack Nicklaus will give the Masters at least one more shot.

The six-time Masters champion said Monday he would contest the tournament play for the 45th time, saying he wanted to fulfill a request by Augusta National chairman Hootie Johnson "and a desire on my part."

"I feel like I can play, so I'm going to play," Nicklaus said at the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame's Botanical Gardens, where he received a key to the city of Augusta.

Nicklaus said last month the chances were "between slim and none" that he would play in the Masters. He felt he needed to be with his family as they grieved over the March 1 drowning of his 17-month-old grandson.

He cleared everything from his business schedule and spent the last few weeks playing golf with his son Steve, a therapeutic way to cope with the tragedy.

It was Steve Nicklaus' son, Jake Walter, who drowned in a hot tub.

"I don't have a lot of golf game, but I've played a lot of golf," Nicklaus said. "I'm certainly not in any tournament shape. I don't expect to be in any tournament shape."

Nicklaus, who has dealt with back and hip problems, said his health was good. One of only two former champions who are members at Augusta National, Nicklaus said he played the course two weeks ago and shot 74.

Nicklaus won his first green jacket in 1963 and got his record sixth Masters title in 1986, shooting a 31 on the back nine to win at age 46. He last made the cut in 2000. *AP*

PHIL Mickelson with his daughter Amanda and his trophy after defeating Rich Beem on the fourth playoff hole to win the Bellsouth Classic. AFP

BELLSOUTH CLASSIC

Mickelson tops 5-way playoff

DULUTH, Georgia—Phil Mickelson made a 13-ft birdie putt on the fourth playoff hole Monday to win the BellSouth Classic over Rich Beem and give the defending US Masters champion momentum heading to Augusta.

Mickelson, Jose Maria Olazabal, Beem, Brandt Jobe and Arjun Atwal tied at 8-under 208 after the final round in the rain-shortened 54-hole tournament to set up the five-man playoff.

Brandt and Arjun were eliminated on the first playoff hole and Olazabal was out after the third playoff hole.

"There were probably six to 10 people who could have won this tournament. I don't know how I dodged the bullet," said Mickelson. "I'm looking forward to the Masters."

Mickelson won it on the par 4, 414-meter (455-yard) 17th hole when he hit his drive in the fairway and put his second shot 20 feet from the hole before sinking the putt.

Beem, who hasn't won since the US PGA Championship in 2002, hit into a fairway bunker on the final playoff hole. His second shot was about 18 m (20 yards) short of the green where he pitched to about 2 feet, setting up a par putt which wasn't needed.

Olazabal, the two-time Masters champion, had a chance to win on the par 5,524-m (576-yard) 18th in regulation to avoid a playoff, but missed a 5-ft birdie putt and settled for par and 69.

He also had a second chance to win on the first playoff hole, missing another 5-ft birdie putt on No. 18. He was eliminated on the third playoff hole when he hit two balls in the water on 18.

"I had a chance to win it (in regulation) and didn't. Had a second chance and missed it," said Olazabal, who also heads to the Masters with his game in pretty good shape.

Mickelson (69), Beem (68), Brandt (67) and Arjun Atwal (64), a native of India and a regular on the Asian tour for eight years, each birdied their last hole to earn a playoff berth along with Olazabal.

Mickelson and Beem had pars on the first playoff hole to advance to the second playoff hole along with Olazabal. Brandt and Atwal each hit into the water that guarded the green on 18, shot over par and were eliminated.

Olazabal, Mickelson and Beem each parred the second playoff hole (No. 17) to send it back to 18.

Mickelson and Beem advanced to the fourth playoff hole when each had tap-in birdies on No. 18.

With the weather sunny and warm, the scores came down Monday after the first two rounds were washed out by rain on Thursday and Friday and delayed 99 minutes on Saturday at the TPC at Sugar Loaf.

Scott McCarron, who led by a stroke entering the final round and the 1997 and 2001 winner here, shot a 76 and was well back at 214. Defending champion Zach Johnson had a 72 and was at 213.

Frank Lickliter (68), Scott Dunlap (69), Arron Oberholser (69), and Tag Ridings (69) finished a stroke behind the leaders at 209. Lickliter was at 8 under playing the 18th when he went for the green and found the water.

Mickelson, the tour's leading money-winner, earned $900,000 (euro698,600) of the $5 million (3.9 million) purse. *AP*

Tigers maul Royals; Orioles prevail

ATLANTA—Dmitri Young became the third player in Major League history to crack three opening day home runs as the Detroit Tigers kicked off the new campaign in style on Monday, crushing the Kansas City Royals 11-2.

Young went four-for-four at the plate and batted in five runs to join George Bell and Tuffy Rhodes as the only players go deep three times on the first day of the season.

"I'm still unconscious right now, an unbelievable day," said Young, who was cheered on by a record crowd of 44,05 at Detroit's Comerica Park.

Brandon Inge contributed a two-run homer and had three RBIs and Craig Monroe drove in a pair of runs as the Tigers, opened their season with a win for the second straight year.

Jeremy Bonderman, 22, the youngest pitcher to start on opening day since 21-year-old Dwight Gooden for the New York Mets in 1986, allowed just one run on six hits to take credit for the win.

Jose Lima gave up five runs and six hits, including three homeruns, in three innings of work to take the loss.

In Baltimore, Rodrigo Lopez pitched six strong innings and Sammy Sosa had a pair hits in his Baltimore debut to help the Orioles to 4-0 win over the Oakland Athletics.

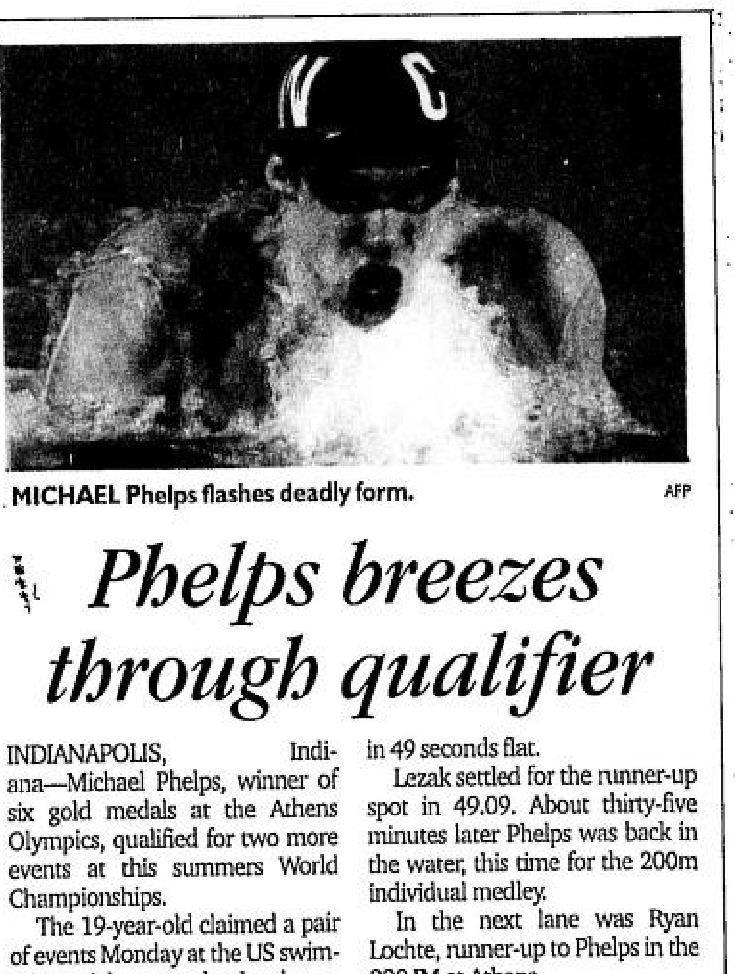
Sosa, who last month appeared with Mark McGwire at a Congressional hearing investigating the use of steroids in Major League Baseball, did not score a run but entertained a record opening day crowd at Camden Yards as he singled in his first two at-bats.

Luis Matos provided the bulk of the offense for the Orioles pounding a two-run homer while Melvin Mora and Rafael Palmeiro also drove in runs.

In Seattle, Richie Sexson homered in his first two at bats and drove in five runs on his Mariners debut to lead the Seattle Mariners to a 5-1 win over the Minnesota Twins.

Sexson, who moved from the Arizona Diamondbacks to the Mariners in $50 million four-year deal, cracked a three-run homer off Twins starter Brad Radke in the first and a two-run shot in the third.

In Chicago, the White Sox nipped the Cleveland Indians, 1-0. *Reuters*



MICHAEL Phelps flashes deadly form. AFP

Phelps breezes through qualifier

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana—Michael Phelps, winner of six gold medals at the Athens Olympics, qualified for two more events at this summers World Championships.

The 19-year-old claimed a pair of events Monday at the US swimming trials—one the hard way and the other with his accustomed ease.

Phelps had to come from far back in the 100 meter freestyle. At the 50-meter mark, American record holder Jason Lezak led with a 23.18 split.

Phelps was seventh at the turn, but began picking off the field one at a time.

He caught Lezak in the waning seconds of the race, finishing first in 49 seconds flat.

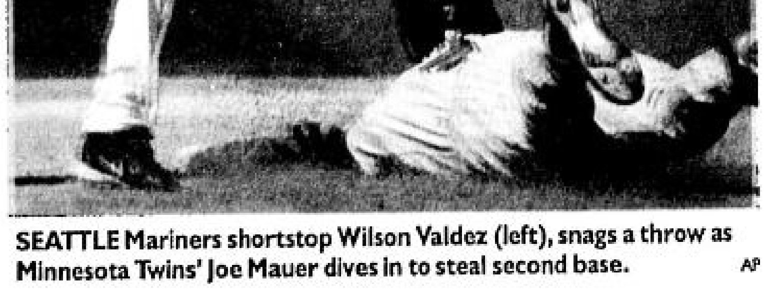
Lezak settled for the runner-up spot in 49.09. About thirty-five minutes later Phelps was back in the water, this time for the 200m individual medley.

In the next lane was Ryan Lochte, runner-up to Phelps in the 200 IM at Athens.

Phelps shot into the lead on the butterfly leg, with Lochte right behind. The lanky wunderkind gained some breathing room on the backstroke and breaststroke laps, then put away the race on the conclusive freestyle leg.

Phelps finished in 1:57.44 with Lochte nearly a second behind in 1:58.40. Phelps said afterwards he was done swimming at the trials. *AFP*

Reds homer twice to nip Mets



SEATTLE Mariners shortstop Wilson Valdez (left), snags a throw as Minnesota Twins' Joe Mauer dives in to steal second base. AP

CINCINNATI — Pedro Martinez and Carlos Beltran made impressive debuts with the New York Mets, but Adam Dunn and Joe Randa homered off Braden Looper in the ninth to give the Cincinnati Reds a dramatic 7-6 victory Monday in the Major League Baseball opener for both clubs.

Martinez struck out 12 in six innings and Beltran homered in the third inning, but Looper could not retire a batter, allowing Dunn's tying two-run homer and Randa's game-winner. Danny Graves pitched a scoreless ninth for the win.

Dunn also had a three-run homer in the first inning off Martinez, the only ball hit hard in his six innings of domination. Martinez allowed three hits, two walks and struck out 12 of his last 14 batters.

Kaz Matsui homered in his first at-bat—the second straight year he's done that—and Cliff Floyd also connected for the Mets. Phillies 8, Nationals 4

In Philadelphia, Kenny Lofton hit a three-run homer and Jon Lieber pitched 5 2-3 effective innings to help the Phillies ruin the Washington Nationals' debut in the National League.

Termel Sledge hit the first homer in Nationals' history and drove in three runs. The team moved during the off season after 36 seasons as the Montreal Expos.

Lieber allowed just three runs and 10 hits, reaching four times and scoring twice, and Pat Burrell had three hits and two RBIs. *AP*

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ANGELO Que's world ranking status from his success at the Carlsberg Masters Vietnam last year qualifies him to shoot for a berth in the British Open. AFP

Que makes Asian team, eyes British Open berth

KUALA LUMPUR—Rising Filipino golfing star Angelo Que is hoping to make it a week of double celebration when he competes for a place in the British Open at the two-day International Final Qualifying Asia from Wednesday.

The 27-year-old Que received a late call-up to join the Asian Team for the Visa Dynasty Cup showdown against Japan next week, replacing Korea's Charlie Wi who withdrew due to his commitment on the US PGA Tour.

Que, who was the team's first reserve, will now shoot for one of the three tickets available this week for the British Open which will be played at Saint Andrews, the home of golf, in July.

"I feel really excited to earn a call-up for the Visa Dynasty Cup," said Que ahead of the 36-hole qualifiers at Saujana Golf and Country Club.

"It's going to be a great week and I'm looking forward to contributing to the team. When I got the phone call, I was really excited. We have a good side to face Japan."

But for now, Que's focus is entirely on the Open qualifiers. A total of 31 players will compete at Saujana's Palm Course for the right to feature in the world's oldest Major in July.

Que became eligible for the qualifiers after earning world ranking status from his maiden Asian Tour success at the Carlsberg Masters Vietnam last November where he beat Thailand's Thongchai Jaidee and US veteran Corey Pavin.

"It will be terrific if I can qualify for the British Open," he said. "I grew up with the US Masters but after watching Tiger (Woods) win at St. Andrews in 2000, it was in my mind to try and qualify for the Open this year.

"The last six months have been great, first winning in Vietnam and earning a place in the Dynasty Cup. Hopefully, I can go on to qualify for my first Major."

Que's confidence will be boosted by the fact that he finished third in the Eisenhower Trophy individual category at Saujana in 2002.

Other top Asian Tour names vying for a ticket to St. Andrews include last year's top four qualifiers—India's Jyoti Randhawa, Australians Scott Barr and Kim Felton and Japan's Yoshinobu Tsukada.

Asian Tour stalwarts Mardan Mamat, Simon Yates, Kyi Hla Han, Jeev Milkha Singh and Terry Pilkadaris will also take part in the qualifying. *AFP*

STA. ELENA CUP

Paz-Iñigo shares top honors with Pagunsan

AFTER four unsuccessful cracks at division titles, Venson Paz and Bobby Iñigo found themselves clutching the biggest trophy when they emerged the overall champions in the ninth Sta. Elena Cup, the member-guest tournament of the Sta. Elena Golf Club in Cabuyao, Laguna over the weekend.

Paz, a 21-handicaper, and 10-handicapper Iñigo combined for 84 points in the first round and then an 82 in the second for a 166 aggregate to win by two over Fred Masigan and Carmelette Villaroman.

Also grabbing a piece of the Sta. Elena Cup limelight were Kevin Tayao-Raymond Sangil, who romped off with the team low gross award, and national team standout Juvic Pagunsan, who rallied to clinch the individual low gross award.

Tayao and Sangil carded rounds of 70 and 69, while Pagunsan nipped Jinky Tuason by one with his 77 in the tourney which had Globe Platinum, Omega watches, Royal Caribbean International, The Golf Shop at Baron Travel, Mizuno and Toyota Motors Philippines, Inc. as sponsors.

Edwin Villanueva also was among the big winners as he won a Yamaha cart from Kart Plaza for scoring the tournament's first ace in four years. He pulled off the feat on the 14th hole.

Masigan, also the individual net champion with 81 points, and his partner Villaroman settled for the Class A plum, winning by six over Henry Sy and Ricky Lee with their 164 aggregate.

The other division winners were Daisy Jackes-Beth Schakel in Class B and Tots Romualdez-Rolly Kapunan in Class C. Jacke-Schakel (158) beat Theresa Arevalo-Boyet Saragoza by four and Romualdez-Kapunan (155) nipped Donovan Yu-Joel Belardo.

Due to the overwhelming success of the event which set a record attendance, Sta. Elena manager Junie Ledesma said they would now provide their caddies with medicare benefits, becoming the first club in the country to do so.

A special award for a low 18-hole round was given to Abe Rosal, who came a stroke short of matching his 64 last year. His 65 in the second round included nine birdies and two bogeys.

Petron-RP jins vying in world meet

THE PETRON Philippines taekwondo team will see action in the 17th men's and 9th women's World Taekwondo Championships slated April 13-17 in Madrid, Spain.

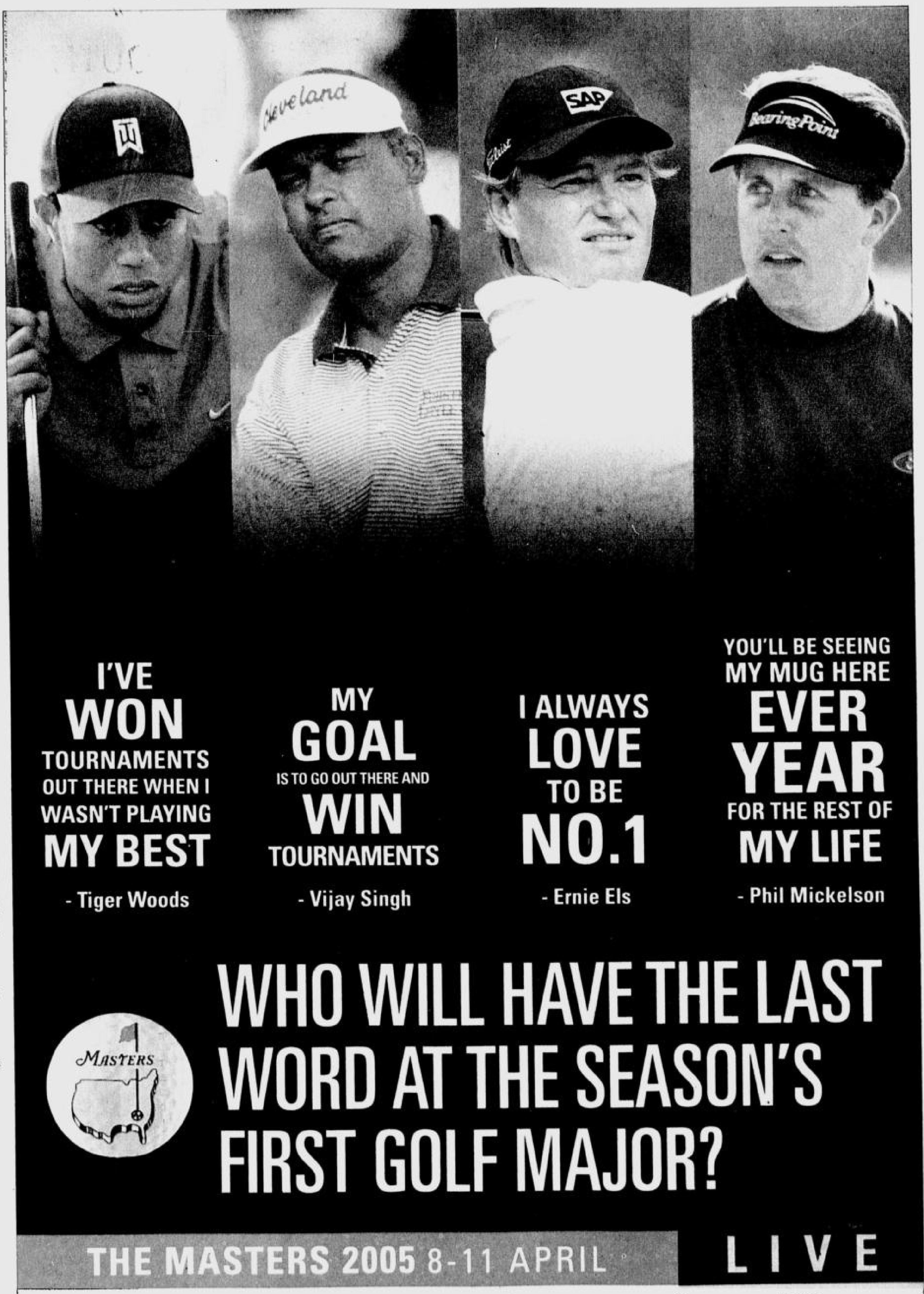
Powerhouse South Korea, Spain, the United States, Chinese Taipei and Australia are among the more than 80 countries vying for honors in the prestigious competition, according to Philippine Taekwondo Association president Robert N. Aventajado.

The 10 athletes on the team headed by PTA vice president Sung Cho Hong are Athens Olympic veterans Tshomlee Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero, Manuel Rivero Jr., Ernesto Juan Mendoza III, Dax Alberto Morfe, Alexander Briones, Carlos Jose Padilla V, Kathleen Eunice Alora, Aphrodite Brillantes and Loraine Lorelie Catalan.

Manolo Gabriel and Stephen Fernandez are the team managers for men and women, respectively, while the coaches are Victor Emmanuel Veneracion (men) and Jesus Morales III (women).

"The Philippines is always regarded as one of the top contenders (in this event)," says Hong. "I expect our athletes to perform well because they have trained long."

The team's trip is sponsored by the Philippine Sports Commission, Petron and the First Gentleman's Foundation.



I'VE WON TOURNAMENTS OUT THERE WHEN I WASN'T PLAYING MY BEST
- Tiger Woods

MY GOAL IS TO GO OUT THERE AND WIN TOURNAMENTS
- Vijay Singh

I ALWAYS LOVE TO BE NO.1
- Ernie Els

YOU'LL BE SEEING MY MUG HERE EVER YEAR FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE
- Phil Mickelson

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SPORTS

Datu pips Antonio for chess title

Final Standings:
7.5-IM Idelfonso Datu, GM Rogelio Antonio Jr., IM Mark Paragua; 7.0-NM Rolando Nolte, NM Rustom Tolentino, Henry Roger Lopez; 6.5-IM Barlo Nadera, Ali Moctar, NM Ernesto Fernandez, Reynaldo Quinonez, NM Prospero Cruz, NM Adbullah Unding; 6.0-GM Eugene Torre

ISTANBUL Olympian International Master Idelfonso Datu emerged champion in the just concluded Filway/Timelife Chess Championship Mindanao leg at the Entertainment Area in SM City-Davao City.

The fourth-seeded Ateneo de Manila University program chess director scored 7.5 points in nine rounds, the same output of top seed GM Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr., and third seed IM Mark Paragua.

After the tiebreak was applied, however, Datu wound up with 50.5 points, Antonio 49.0 and Paragua 46.5. They earned P18,333 each plus trophies in the National Chess Federation of the Philippines-sanctioned tournament that ended Sunday night.

Datu, an enlisted member of the Philippine Army whose stint in the tournament was supported by Ateneo University athletics director Jose "Jun Jun" Capistrano Jr., and Antonio drew their ninth round duel in just 23 moves of a Double Fianchetto.

Paragua, on the other hand, extracted the full point out of a drawish position after GM Eugene Torre ran out of time in 45 moves of an Alekhine Defense.

At 4th to 6th placers were NM Rolando Nolte, NM Rustom Tolentino and Henry Roger Lopez after tallying 7.0 points apiece in the event bankrolled by Filway Marketing president/CEO Hector Tagaysay. Each received P2,000.

IM Barlo Nadera, Ali Moctar, NM Ernesto Fernandez, Reynaldo Quinonez, NM Prospero Cruz, NM Adbullah Unding were lodged at 6.5 points, half a point ahead of Torre, who got mired at 6.0 points. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

Mariano, Gonzales take 1st round matches

FILIPINO Grandmaster Nelson Mariano II and compatriot GM-candidate Jayson Gonzales won their opening round matches in the 7th Dubai International Open Chess Championships at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club.

Handling black, the 55th seed Mariano took the scalp of Al-Housa Khalil of Palestine after 59 moves of a King's Indian Defense while No. 53 Gonzales also prevailed with the black pieces against WFM Shirin Navabi of Iran after 49 moves of a Modern Defense.

Mariano will play against Gerogian GM Giorgi Kacheishvili late Tuesday. Gonzales will also play white against Super GM Alexander Riazantsev of Russia.

MARITES Natad of Southwestern University dives for a shot against USLS. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Southwestern U, USJ-R hurdle rivals

SOUTHWESTERN University and University of San Jose-Recoletos launched their title-retention campaigns on a hot note by beating their respective opponents at the start of the 2005 Nestea Beach Volley Visayas eliminations at La Salle Greenhills yesterday.

Longtime partners Marites Natad and Florian Gutierrez of Southwestern hurdled their first two matches while veteran Jonrey Sasing and rookie Joseph Alguno of USJ-R showed great teamwork for a similar 2-0 record.

The Southwestern female spikers defeated University of Cebu, 21-10, in the morning before turning back University of St. La Salle, 21-9, in the afternoon. The USJ-R boys tripped University of Visayas, 21-17, and Colegio de la Purisima Concepcion, 21-14.

With 2-0 records, the reigning champions in this event featuring the country's top beach volley pairs advanced to today's quarterfinals. They both have one game each left in the elims, however, and will try to win them for a higher placing.

Aside from Southwestern, also making it to the women's quarterfinals with 2-0 cards were 2004 runner up University of Visayas and University of Negros Occ. Recoletos.

The UV pair of Janez Igot and Joyce Nunez also won their first two matches, crushing University of San Carlos, 21-8, before whipping St. Paul Business School, 21-6.

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Race 3-1. Kambal 2. Money in Motion 3. Here I Come 4. Last Dance

Race 4-1. Presidentiable 2. Blue Sheikh 3. Jay Nicole 4. Diabolo Don

Race 5-1. Silver Cho Cho 2. Extreme Magic 3. Extreme Illusion 4. Sekreta 5. Rose and Toy

Race 6-1. Golden Lance 2. Battle Hero 3. Western Legend 4. Burst of Speed

Race 7-1. Sea of Galilee 2. Paano Ba 3. Never Enough 4. Fortius 5. Wynona Raider

Race 8-1. El Cid 2. Ahoy There 3. Mighty Dragon 4. Something Silver 5. Blue Face 6. Silver Eagle

SPORTSWATCH

Saraza forges title duel with Sy

IMUS, Cavite—Kim Ivor Saraza ousted Juan Fidel Regis 6-3, 6-4 to arrange a titular showdown with Akio Sy in the boys' 14-under division in the 2005 MILO Junior Tennis Cup & Regional Workshop here Monday at the Imus Tennis Club. Saraza thumped the same Regis 6-1, 6-1 to stay on course for a double championship when he tangles with Reymond Padigos, who routed local bet Ronnel Enilo 6-2, 6-3, for the boys' 16-under trophy. Other finalists in the Milo netfest organized by CTW and supported by Adidas with Philta sanction are Jameson Macagba against Calvin Canlas in the unisex 10-under; Kyle Cordero with Canlas in the boys' 12-under; and Zhane Quitara against Regine Monsod for the girls' 16-under jewel.

Monolith favored in PCFBL-Aces tilt

MONOLITH Construction is the strong favorite to rule the two-month long Boysen Cup of the PCFBL-Aces Basketball Tournament being held at the Tanduay Gym in Quiapo. Still unbeaten, the team has clustered six wins in as many games while three other squads—Boysen Paints, PCFBL Selection and RBT Techwerks follow. Boysen and PCFBL are tied for second place with 4-2 slates while Techwerks is third at 4-3. Occupying fourth and fifth positions are Ironcon Builders (3-2) and Welcoat Paints (3-4). In sixth place is Alpah 7 with two victories against 4 defeats, followed by Davies Paints, 1-4. Omni Yatai hogs the cellar with a 0-6 mark. The double-round elimination ends on April 12 where six teams enter the semifinals. The top two teams after the semis will take a bye and will have the twice to beat advantage. Ballclubs occupying third and fourth places in the team standings face each other for the right to meet the number two team while team number 4 and 5 engage in a knockout battle to determine which of them duels the number one team.

1st Fishing Tourney at the Pond slated

THE 888 FISHING Place, a fishing restaurant and bar located at Covelandia road, in Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite will be having a Fishing Tournament dubbed as "1st Fishing Tourney at the Pond," which is set on May 1, Sunday. Invited to participate in the big summer fishing event are all anglers from different cities such as Manila, Parañaque, Las Piñas and Cavite. The tournament will start at 8 a.m. up to 2 p.m., hosted by lawyer Mar Espiritu. Sponsored by Ginebra San Miguel. The entry fee per angler is P150. For reservation and inquiries call: 888 Fishing Place at (046) 4340803; Melay Santos at 0915-5638209.

Bear Brand Kitefest visits CdO

FRESH from a very successful leg in Puerto Princessa, Palawan which registered the most number of participants so far at 919, the 15th Bear Brand Kitefest will visit Cagayan de Oro City on April 10. The venue will be the Don Gregorio Pelaez Sports Complex. Cagayan de Oro City will be the sixth this year to host the Kitefest which has also been to Dumaguete, Lingayen, Tacloban and General Santos. CDO leg has three categories: Flat, Geometric and figure; and four age groups: Elementary division for children aged 6-12 years old, high school division for participants aged 13-16, college division for participants aged 17-21 and adults division for contestants aged 22 and above.

GCAP 7-Cock Derby finals tonight

IT'S anybody's race for the championship of "Gentlemen Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) 7-Cock Derby" tonight at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Event sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Gunning for the title are Gerry Ramos (Calmer Against All Odds), Patrick Antonio (Complexor 3000), Benjie Lim (Love U Papa), Tony Lasala (NML SP), Tonette Luzuriaga and Paeng Araneta (TL and Friends), Dini Cuenca and Dante Hinlo (Dini and Dante), Rudy Albano (Mulawin A), among others. Meanwhile, the "330 K Big Event 6-Cock Derby" will be on Saturday. Call 8731040 and 8743910 for inquiries.

BLSS launches Camp Aqua 2005

THE BERT Lozada Swim School, the only swimming institution that provides personalized and group teaching instruction to infants, children and adults, has launched Camp Aqua 2005, its summer learn to swim program at over 30 venues. Through the Bert Lozada Swimming Program, BLSS teaches water safety and confidence, basic and advance swimming skills, and the latest techniques in competitive swimming. BLSP learn to swim programs include: level 1: my baby and me course (6 months to 3 years old); level 2: little snapper (kids 4 to 6 six years old); level 3: swim jammer 1 (basic course—7 years old and above); level 4: swim jammer 2 (advanced course; level 5: swim squad (competitive course). Call 5635532, 5891982, 5628041, 8050237, 8035998, 8000573.

Manila Inv'l subs for Batang Pinoy

THE TEMPORARY shelving of the Batang Pinoy compelled the Manila Sports Council (MASCO) to come up with a meet similar in form and nature.

Dubbed the Manila Invitational, the tournament is tentatively scheduled in September, featuring young athletes from the different regions around the country.

MASCO chairperson Arnold 'Ali' Atienza said five sports disciplines have been initially calendared for the event, a number he expects to increase in the succeeding stagings of the meet.

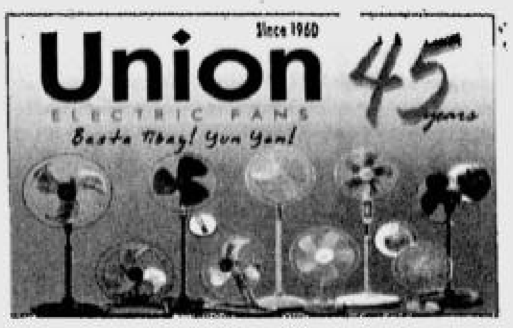
Team Maynila under Atienza, is expected to be reinforced by the champions in the coming 4th Manila Youth Games slated April 17-24 at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

The MYG got an additional boost as Red Bull signed up as major sponsor.

"We're happy to be a major sponsor of the MYG," said George Bal[illegible]tas, senior vice president of Photokina, ma[illegible]s of Red Bull.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde
Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph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WHAT'S INSIDE

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■ Gimmick guide /A2-2
■ Boob tube booboos /A2-3

How lipo threatens friendships

Designer Rene Salud, who hosts a TV show segment with one cosmetic surgeon, has run to another for his latest procedure

By Nini Valera

SALUD no stranger to cosmetic surgery, and he doesn't hide it, either

A BULGE in his tummy caught on national television prompted couturier Rene Salud to go for liposuction.

Salud, a segment host in "Magandang Umaga Bayan," did the deed recently—with the expert disposition of his longtime friend, Dr. Manny Calayan.

The routine surgery triggered a slew of show biz drama that raked up the rivalry between the Calayans (Manny and his wife Pie, a cosmetic surgeon like himself) and Dr. Viki Belo, Salud's cohost in the MUB segment, "Beauty Three Expert."

"I had my lipo on impulse," Salud explained in an exclusive interview with Inquirer Entertainment. "My going to Dr. Calayan had nothing to do with his supposed rivalry with Dr. Belo. Both of them are good friends of mine. I actually consulted with Dr. Belo first, and we already had a schedule for the lipo. She even wanted to air the procedure, and I agreed."

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

With their busy schedules crisscrossing, Salud said, he never made it to his appointment with Belo.

"Then one time, I attended an event with Dr. Calayan, and I complained about not being able to fit into my clothes," the designer recounted. "He told me not to eat breakfast the following day and to go to his clinic first thing in the morning. At that point, I would have asked any surgeon to give me a lipo."

About three liters of fat were removed from Salud's belly. He woke up after the procedure feeling lighter and sexier, he said. The only discomfort he has experienced is having to wear a girdle for at least a month, "so the skin would stick to the muscle."

It's only been a week but, he said, "Now I can flaunt my body."

Must look good

Salud is no stranger to cosmetic surgery.

"I'm in the business of beauty, of making people beautiful through the clothes I make," explained Salud. I should look my best, too... I have to look very young."

He refused to divulge his age, but he had no qualms about enumerating the various procedures he had undergone.

"My first was 15 years ago," he related. "I never looked good in pictures and on television. That's why I wanted to improve my [features]."

He had his nose done, and then his eyes.

"Actually, my real nose is not that bad," he clarified. "[Still] I wanted to enhance my beauty. As I grew older, I noticed that the skin was sticking more and more to the implant. I thought of removing [the implant], but I enjoyed the nose very much when I had it."

His real problem was not his nose, but the lack of a jaw, said Salud. He found out after a trip to his dentist, who fixed his teeth and altered his gums to give him a more prominent jaw line.

"That was about four years ago," Salud recalled. "After the procedure, I noticed that my nose was sticking out of my face. Then it swelled, so I had the insertion taken out."

Having a nose job undone was a more delicate procedure, he found out.

"It had taken only 30 minutes to insert the silicone," he said, "but removing it took more than eight hours. It was also more expensive."

Next were the crow's feet around his eyes. They had to be erased, for a more youthful look.

"That's when I had botox," Salud said.

He got his first botox treatment in the US. When he returned to Manila, he told his friend Calayan about the procedure, which was not yet in vogue locally at the time.

"Manny told me he could give me the [same] treatments," said Salud. "Now, I go to him for my botox."

But Salud warned against the dangers of botox: "When you have too much of it (botox), your face could look fierce. You may even end up looking like a demon. So if you go for botox, first you must discuss with your doctor exactly how you'd like to look."

Nothing wrong

Instead of a face lift, Salud opted to have what is known as an aptos thread procedure on his face to stretch the skin and prevent it from sagging. For this he went to Calayan's wife, Pie.

"I'm friends with all the cosmetic surgeons in the Philippines, so I can have procedures done when I want," Salud joked. Turning serious, he added: "There's actually nothing wrong with cosmetic surgery. Lipo should not be banned. For one thing, it could be a major source of dollars for the Philippines. I know friends who live abroad and go to Thailand for such treatments. So why can't they come here instead?"

They're back to keep the music playing.
Fresh from their critically acclaimed concert in January 2005, Martin and Patti return with their greatest hits and some truly unforgettable duets including "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?", "Baby Come To Me", "Tell Me", "Forever", "Umagang Kay Ganda" and many more.
Don't miss it. This time.
Martin Nievera & Patti Austin
LIVE IN CONCERT
April 22, 2005
Friday, 8:30 pm
Araneta Coliseum
Tickets at
P250 • P600 • P1200 • P1800
(plus 5% ticketron service charge)
Available at
TICKETNET CALL 911-5555
FOR INQUIRIES CALL MAXMEDIA 551-7777
Also performing at
Freedom Ring Amphitheater
April 23, 2005
Saturday, 7:30 pm
Tickets available at
PAMPANGA Department Store (Customer Service Desk) (045) 963-7979
TICKETNET CALL 911-5555
ALL JOLLIBEE BRANCHES IN PAMPANGA

Urgent matters of the heart

TAKE FIVE

By Marinel R. Cruz

ALTHOUGH young singers Rachelle Ann Go and Christian Bautista are mum about what they feel for each other, their actions reveal the truth.

Christian spent the Holy Week in Puerto Azul, Cavite, with Rachelle Ann's family.

They like watching movies together and hanging out at Rachelle Ann's Quezon City home.

Christian even gifted Rachelle Ann with a silver necklace on Valentine's Day.

Go figure.

So what's the real score?

We like each other but we don't want to rush things. We're both very picky. My family likes him, too, and his family is slowly bonding with mine.

Both your families know?

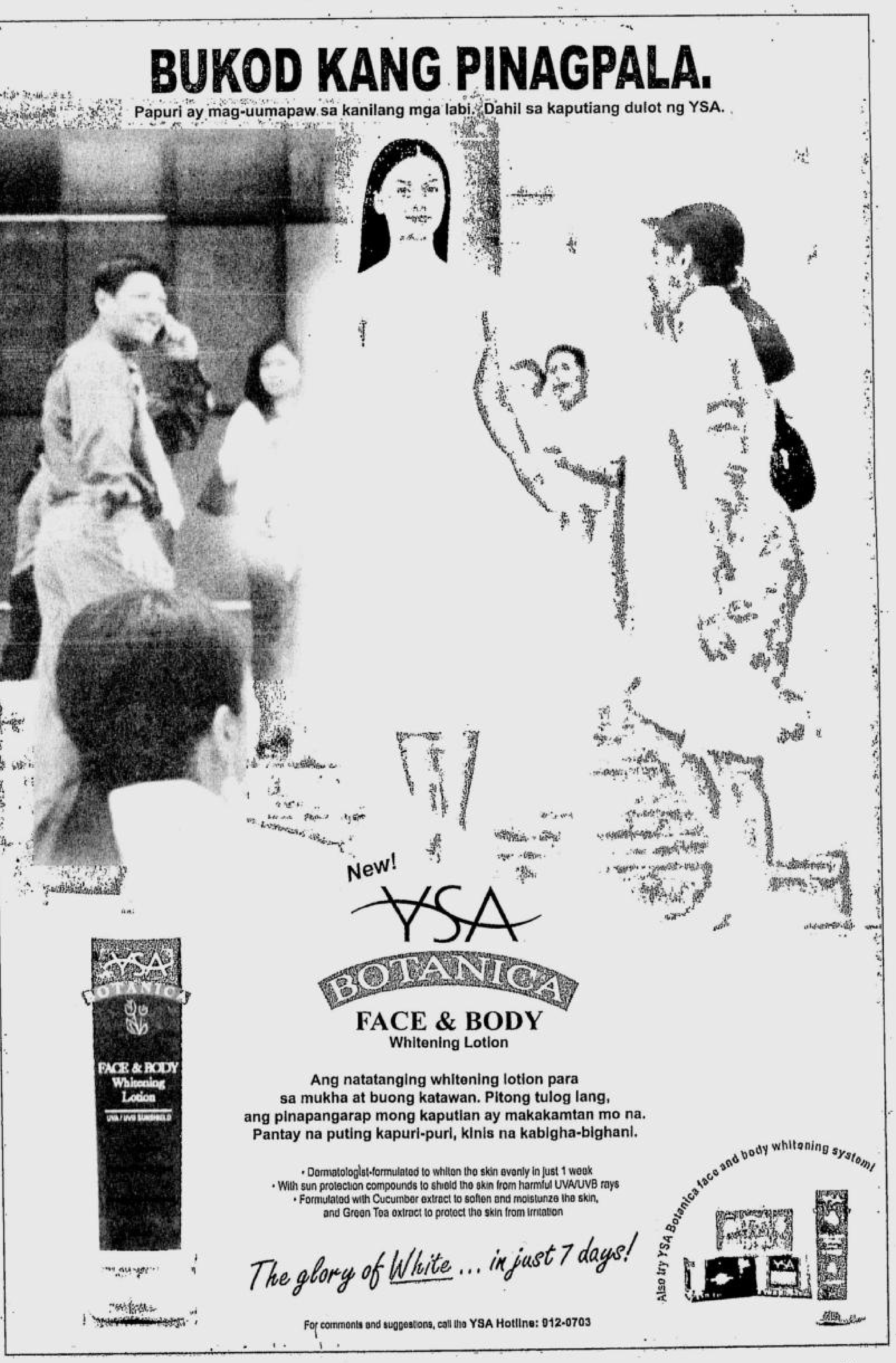
I don't know that [for sure]. We don't talk about it. As of now, we're still in the process of getting to know each other.

Didn't you spend the Holy Week together?

That trip to Puerto Azul was planned just the week before. We asked all of our friends—Erik (Santos), Frenchie (Dy), Sarah (Geronimo) and Mark (Bautista)—but they were not interested. Mark and Sarah were in Japan, Erik was in Subic, and Frenchie also spent the holidays abroad. Only Christian was free. It was fun. We went swimming a lot."

How did it start?

URGENT/ A2-7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Ang natatanging whitening lotion para sa mukha at buong katawan. Pitong tulog lang, ang pinapangarap mong kaputian ay makakamtan mo na. Pantay na puting kapuri-puri, kinis na kabigha-bighani.
• Dermatologist-formulated to whiten the skin evenly in just 1 week
• With sun protection compounds to shield the skin from harmful UVA/UVB rays
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The glory of White ... in just 7 days!
Also try YSA Botanica face and body whitening system!
For comments and suggestions, call the YSA Hotline: 912-0703

Robert Seña, Isay Alvarez in 'Love You, Hate You'

ROBERT Seña and Isay Alvarez

HUSBAND and wife Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez, "Miss Saigon" artists both, perform for a cause in a series of shows that starts on Thursday at Merk's Bar Bistro, "Love You, Hate You, Love You" will benefit the charitable mission projects of All for Jesus Foundation.

The foundation is also sponsoring the couple's show on April 28. AJF's mission is to preserve and promote marriage as a social institution and to strengthen the family.

On April 14, the show will be sponsored by the St. Joseph Parish in Cabalantian, Bacolor, Pampanga. The goal is to raise funds to rebuild the parish church that was buried in lahar in October 1995.

On April 21, "Love You, Hate You, Love You," the show will benefit underprivileged youths who will be given scholarships. The show will be sponsored by the San Lorenzo Charity in cooperation with the Consuelo Chito Madrigal Foundation.

Call 7574750.

SHOW TIME

Tonight

Catch Area One at Hard Rock Cafe. Call 8934661.

Side A at Tavern on the Square.

Wednesday jazz festival starts at Merk's with Richard Merk, Eddie Katindig, Mon David and Sandra Lim.

Tomorrow

The CompanY kicks off a series of shows at Hard Rock Cafe (all Thursdays of this month).

Dance diva Sybil performs at the Glorietta Activity Center 7 p.m.

April 8

Sybil at Alabang Town Center. 6 p.m.

Mocha with Spinart at Hard Rock Cafe Fridays.

Streetscape at Shangri-La Plaza Complex presents Sound Syndicate at 9:30 p.m.

Tenor Ramon Acoymo, Dean of the UP College of Music, is the featured soloist for the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's season finale at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Main Theater, 8 p.m.

"Bedazzled," an hour-long Broadway cum Las Vegas show at Club Mwah! (Fridays and Saturdays), 10:30 p.m. Call 5357943.

Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square.

Tim Tayag, Al Manalo and Mike Unson in "April Fools—Stand-up Comedians On The Loose!" 7 p.m. at San Mig El Pueblo, Ortigas. Call 6375499.

April 9

Troy Montero in his very first solo concert, "Special Memory," at the Music Museum, 8:30 p.m. Geneva Cruz, KC Montero and Jeni Hernandez are the special guests. Call 9141104.

Passage at Hard Rock Cafe Saturdays.

Time And A Half at Shangri-La Plaza Streetscape.

Sybil at Ayala Center Cebu.

Forte band at Merk's Saturdays.

Wiseguys at Tavern on the Square Saturdays.

April 10

Judy Ann Santos visits Metropolis Starmall at 4 p.m.

Anne Curtis and Geoff Eigenmann at The Pizza Company in Market! Market!, Taguig.

Rachelle Anne Go at Robinson's Dasmariñas.

Highway 69 band plays at Hard Rock Cafe Sundays.

April 11

Main Avenue at Hard Rock.

Bernie Uy at Merk's.

April 12

Viva Hotmen, Alken Miranda, Mcmil Denison and Paolo Serrano in Toilet Humor's primetime special.

TROY Montero

April 13 and 14

King in his first major solo concert, "King on Top of the World," at the Music Museum, 9 p.m. Call 7216726.

April 14

The Cascades in a dinner concert at the Hard Rock Café, featuring Ramon Jacinto & Friends, and The Elderly Brothers. Call 9115555

Sheryn Regis topbills Toilet Humor's show in Malate.

Track at Tavern on the Square.

April 15

Cascades at the Araneta Coliseum with Willie Nepomuceno. Call 9115555

Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

April 16

The Cascades goes to Cebu for a concert at the Waterfront Hotel with the band Area One as guest.

Aretha and the Souled Out Band at Merk's. Call 9115555.

April 17

Rachelle Ann Go at Robinsons Pioneer.

Highway 69 at Hard Rock Cafe.

April 18

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square.

Main Avenue at Hard Rock Cafe.

Bernie Uy at Merk's.

April 22

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square.

Mocha with Spinart at Hard Rock Cafe.

Acoustic Jive at Merk's

April 23

JA Rule at Araneta Coliseum, 9 p.m. Call 9115555

Boyz II Men will also serenade that crowd at the PhilSports Arena (Ultra), with Kyla as guest. Call Ticketworld, 8919999

April 24

Rachelle Ann Go at Robinson's Metro East.

Highway 69 at Hard Rock Cafe.

April 25

Main Avenue at Hard Rock.

Bernie Uy at Merk's.

Freestyle at Tavern on the Square.

April 29

Lito Camo takes center stage in "Lagi na Lang Kayo... Ako Naman!" at the Music Museum, 8:30 p.m. Call 8919999.

Acoustic Jive at Merk's.

Rachelle Ann Go in concert at Aliw Theater with Mark Bautista, Christian Bautista, Jay-R and Ogie Alcasid as special guests.

May 6

Christian Bautista at Casino Filipino in Parañaque. The concert, entitled, "The Way You Look at Christian Bautista," will have Dianne de la Fuente as guest. Call 9115555.

May 6 to 29

"Once On This Island," a musical retelling of the Little Mermaid fable, at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater, RCBC Plaza, Makati City, with Friday and Saturday evening shows at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinee shows at 3 p.m. For interested fund-raising groups and sponsors, call 5365844.

May 13 and 14

Ella May Saison is back in "Soulful, the Concert" at the Music Museum. Nina, Akafellas and Jimmy Bondoc will be her guests. Call 8919999.

May 13 and 15

Alvin Barcelona, a Catholic lay preacher and singer-songwriter, in his first major concert, "Believe," at the Party Central, Mother Ignacia Avenue. For inquiries, reservations and sponsorships, call Beaconlight, 7229562, or e-mail beacon@philonline.com.

PAOLO Bediones

May 21

Paolo Bediones struts his stuff at the Araneta Coliseum for Carter's underwear fashion event, "The 'C' Show."

Sarah Geronimo captured the hearts of the Filipino community in the US at the Lunar Parade in Pasadena, California, last February. After a successful series of concerts there last year with her fellow champions Rachelle Ann Go and Christian Bautista, Sarah Geronimo will be flying back to the US for the "Return of the Champions US Tour 2005." The sked: New York, May 21; Washington, May 22; Chicago, May 28; San Francisco, June 4; Seattle, June 5; Los Angeles, June 11; Las Vegas, June 12; San Diego June 17; and Hawaii, June 19.

THE COMPANY

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

SINO ANG BABANGGA SA GINEBRA?
PBA
ABC
iba tayo
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
ASTIG!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Gatekeepers (5:10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5:35 PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	'Til Death Do Us Part	Yes Yes Show			Insider
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Linya		Teledyaryo		Sinulog Festival				Paco Park Presents	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game Bol	PBA		PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol		Look Who's Talking	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Tyler Hungry Heart	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Full House	Stairway To Heaven	Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Score Tactics	The Ring	First 48 (Hrs)		Trading Spouses		Extreme Make-Over		Newswatch Now	Pangako Mo	Cargo For Truth	
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		On Air Tambayan		Direk	Junior Reyes Report	Bestfriends	Celebrity Single	Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Fantastic Four	Static Shock	TBA	Just For Laughs	Mad TV		Dr. Katz	Chappelle's Show	Sweet Spot	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Mad TV		Worst Case Scenario	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Simple Life	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	Complete Savages	What I Like About You	Who Wants To Marry My Dad		Last Comic Standing		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Matalino Man Ang Matsing				Andrea Paano Ba Ang Maging Isang Ina				Oras Oras Araw Araw			Persona	Babangon Ako't Dudurugin Kita (9:15 PM)				Tumayo Ka't Lumaban	
Studio 23		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Beyond	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	C.S.I.			Las Vegas		News Central	Oprah		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN		The Amazing Race 6		Maximum Exposure		The Contender		7 Days (Season III)		Pensacola		Ripley's Believe It or Not		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		The Contender		Fear Factor	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		American Idol		Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	American Idol		Philly		JAG		Friends	American Idol
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Showreel Asia		Taboo		Dangerous Jobs		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wow!Dogs With Joris Kamp, Mentor, Prince	Chimp Diaries	About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Showreel Asia		Taboo	
Solar Sports						IBF Thailand Open '05		ATP Open 13 '05 S-final Johansson vs Lopez					NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Seattle @ Sacramento					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special 101 Most Shocking Moments		You're Invited	Life & Style		Style Star	Nigella Bites II	Breathing Room	Genuine Article
HBO	High Risk (2:45 PM)			Only You (4:15 PM)				Head Of State			Disturbing Behavior (7:35 PM)			Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines			Gridlock'd (10:45PM)		
Star Movies			Festival In Cannes (3:45 PM)				Air Bud Spikes Back (A.K.A. Air Bud 5)			Total Recall (7:05 PM)				Rangers			8MM (10:40PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
ESPN		Motorsport Asia	ESPN Great Outdoor Games				Uefa Champions League				Goals!	Sportscenter Asia	Uefa Champions League					Really Bend It Like Beckham	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/ Unfabulous Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/ Unfabulous Bunny				My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim		
Cinemax	Fatal Lessons: The Good Teacher (2:45 PM)	Mother, May I Sleep With Danger?			The Flash (5:45 PM)			Music From Another Room (7:15 PM)				Tempted			Pinata Survival Island				
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Missing		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched	Judging Amy		Missing		Santa Jr.			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		The District (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Colosseum: Rome's Arena Of Death		Hidden History Of Rome		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
Sports Plus	Bell South Classic Day3						The Players Championship Highlights		Inside the PGA	NBa Game Denver vs Memphis					Bikini Destination	World Poker Tour Ep.12 Reno			
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millennium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		One In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

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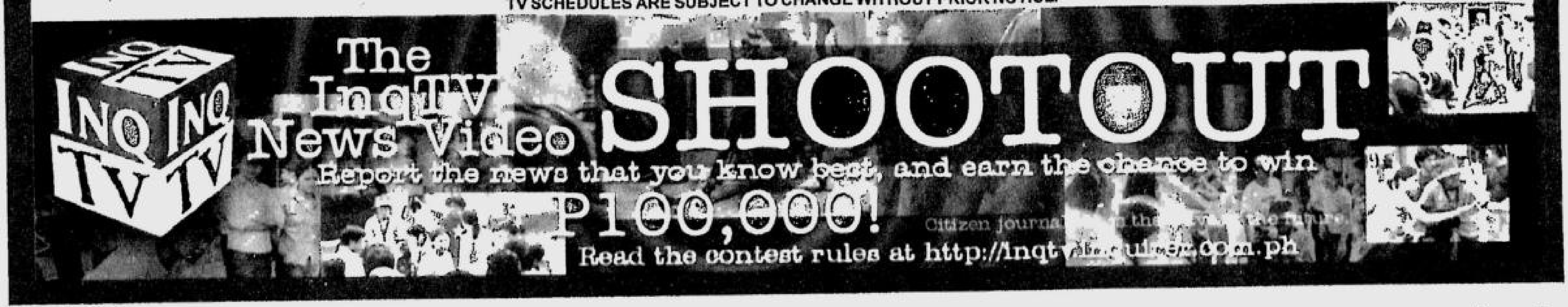
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Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: How good does your English have to be to get accepted by a call center?

Guest: The standard is, you have to be very affluent in English.

(Hey, that's really rich!)

* * *

Host: How is your case coming along?

Guest: We are not worried about the outcome. After all, we have the best legal attorneys around.

(As opposed to what other kinds of attorneys?)

* * *

Host: What do you like to do most when it's summer?

Guest: At the beach, I really like to go snorking!

(Snork! Snork!)

* * *

Host: Do you believe the boy who said that Michael Jackson sexually abused him?

Guest: No, I don't.

Host: Why not?

Guest: Because he said Michael made him drink hard liquor. Even if Michael forced him he couldn't drink hard liquor because he had cancer and *isa na lang ang kanyang liver!*

(Why, how many livers do *you* have?)

* * *

Host: Do you think our claim to Sabah will be revived by the government?

Guest: I think so, because Malaysia is running after our illegals there, and because *nakiusap na sa gobiyerno ang mga ears ng* sultan of Sulu.

(Such eloquent ears!)

* * *

Host: Has the feminist movement been successful in this country?

Guest: Yes, I think it's successful.

Host: Why do you think so?

Guest: Because now, husbands appreciate how hard their wives are.

(Oh, those hard, hard wives...)

* * *

Host: You've received so many gifts on your birthday. Do you want to thank your friends and fans?

Guest: Yes, *maraming marami sa inyo!*

(Ano daw?)

* * *

Host: Our show today is being telecast from the beautiful home of (name of star). (To star) We want to thank you very much for accepting us into your house!

(How—acceptable!)

* * *

Host: In this portion, we are focusing on the business of making toys. Our guest is a veteran toy maker. (To guest) Can you tell us more about your business?

Guest: Yes. We toy makers are in the business of making toys!

(Switch to another channel—please!)

Sci-fi tearjerker

TAKE it from filmmaker **George Lucas**: the final "Star Wars" prequel episode, "Revenge of the Sith," will be the most emotionally-affecting ever.

He describes it as "a 'Titanic' in outer space, a real tearjerker, and it will be received in a way that none of us can expect.

In the episode's most crucial scenes, Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker (**Hayden Christensen**) and master Obi-Wan Kenobi (**Ewan McGregor**) wage a furious fight against their adversaries in a battle of deadly spaceships.

Senator Padme Amidala (**Natalie Portman**) plays a key role. And Skywalker becomes the notorious Darth Vader.

The "Star Wars" adventures began in 1977, and have sold more than $3.3 billion worth of tickets at the box office.

'Ong-Bak'

ASIAN countries' homegrown movie industries may be languishing, but some films from the region are doing well abroad.

One of them is the Thai action-thriller, "Ong-Bak: The Thai Warrior," which is being released internationally by Buena Vista.

In the film, the head of a statue of the Buddha is stolen, and Ting (**Tony Jaa**), a Muay Thai fighter, is tasked with winning the Buddha's head back from the crime lord who now possesses it.

"Ong-Bak" is directed by **Prachya Pinkaew.**

SECOND WEEK
MTRCB RATING G
ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
Walt Disney Pictures presents
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WELCOME TO THE INFANTRY.
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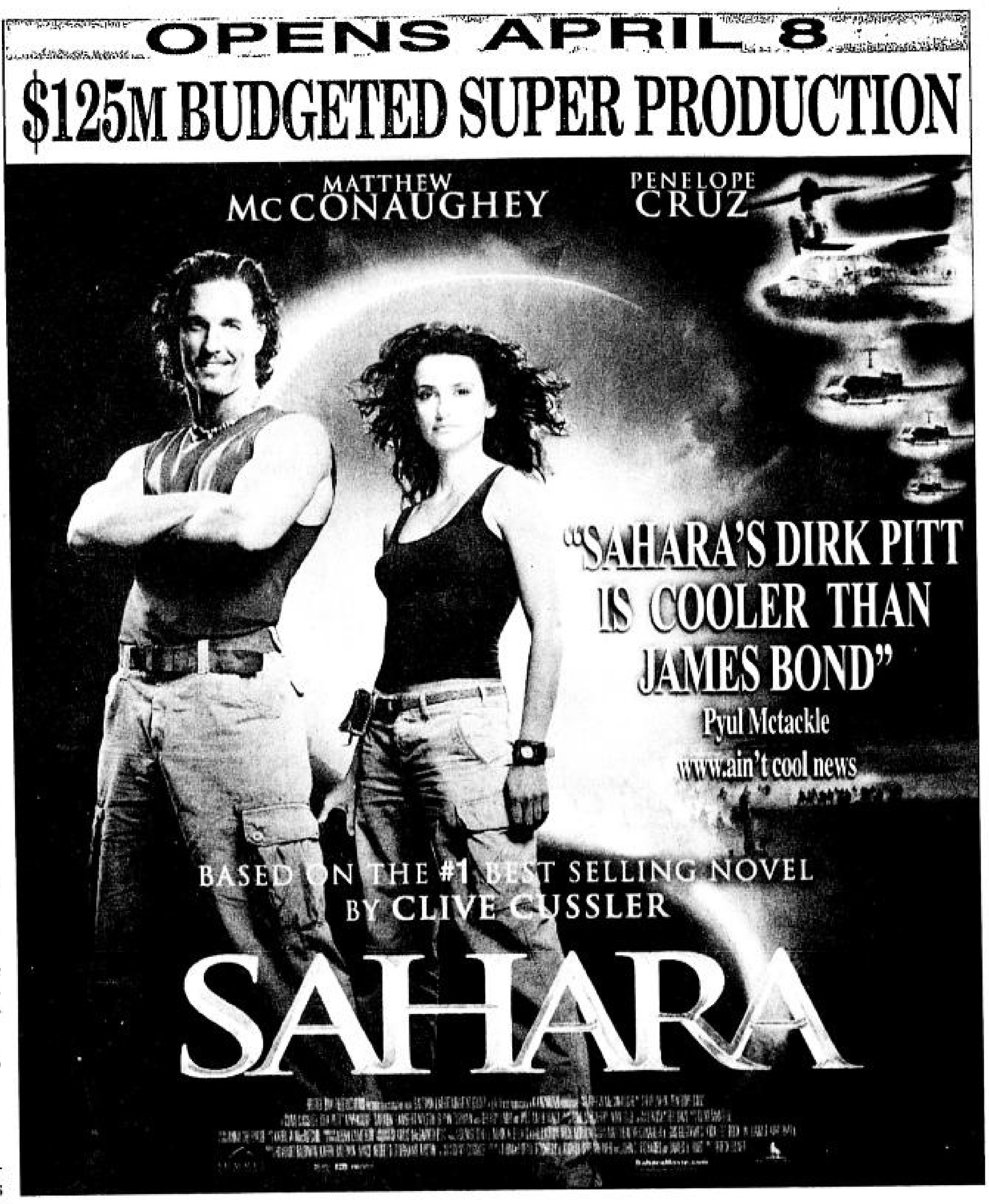
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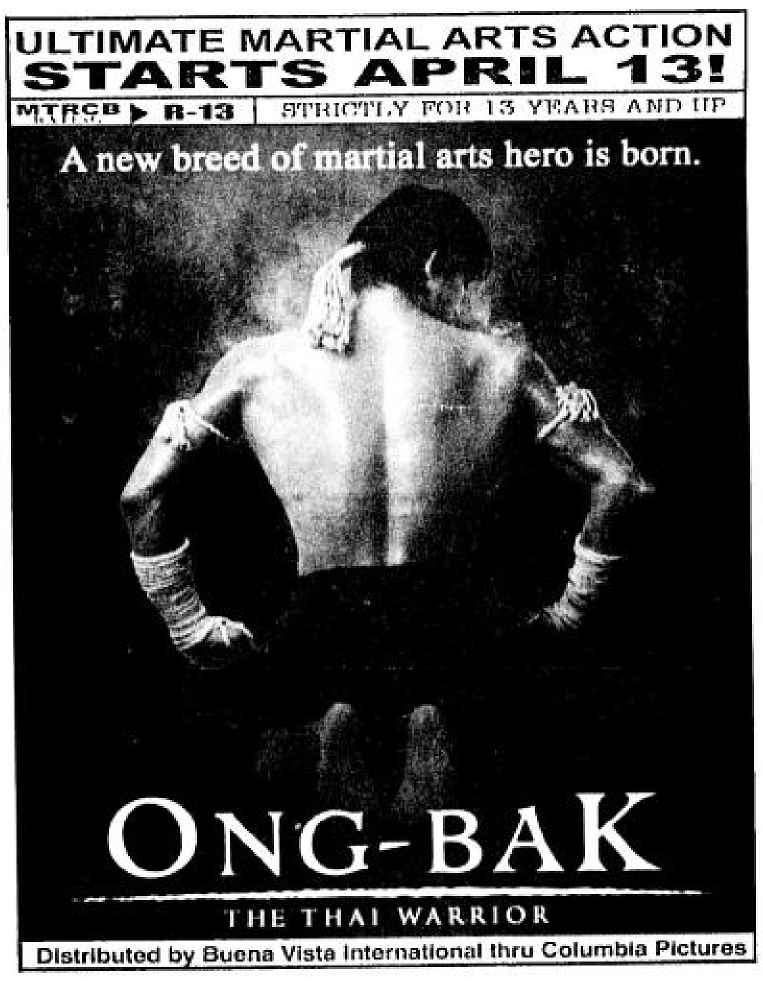
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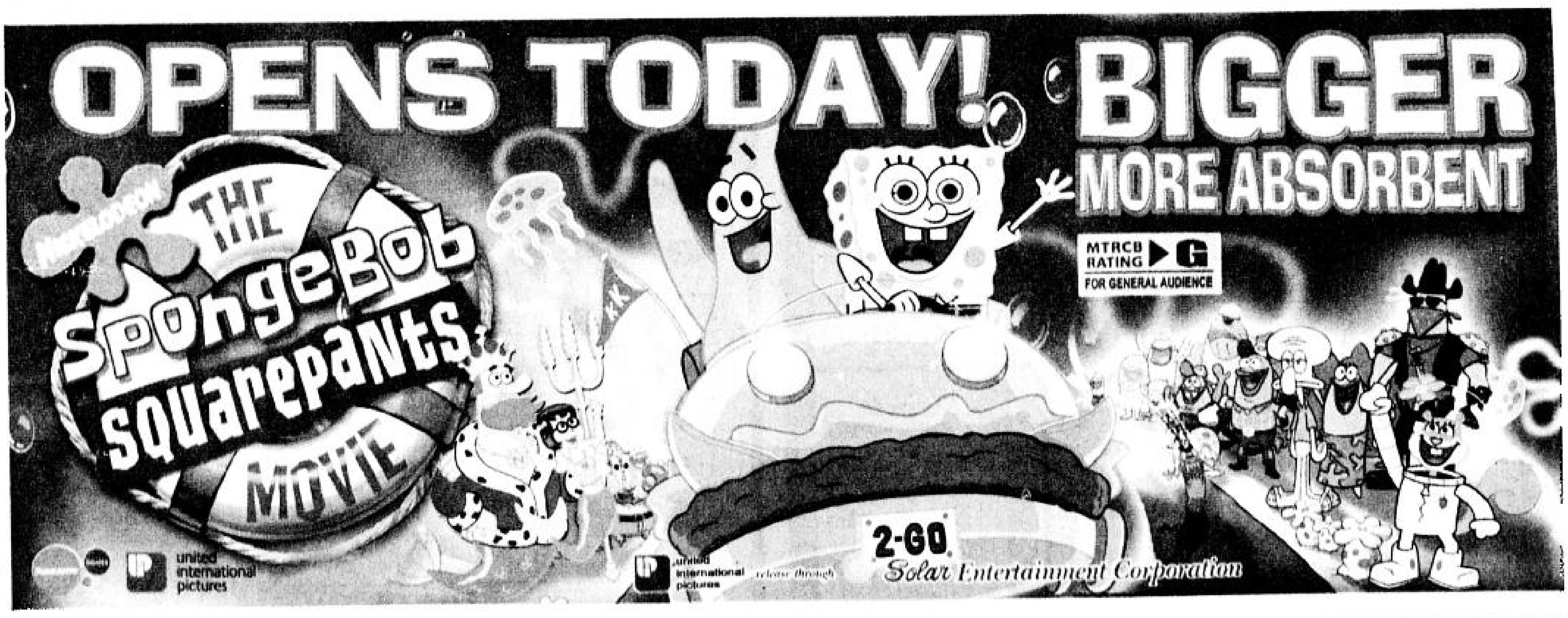
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The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie
united international pictures
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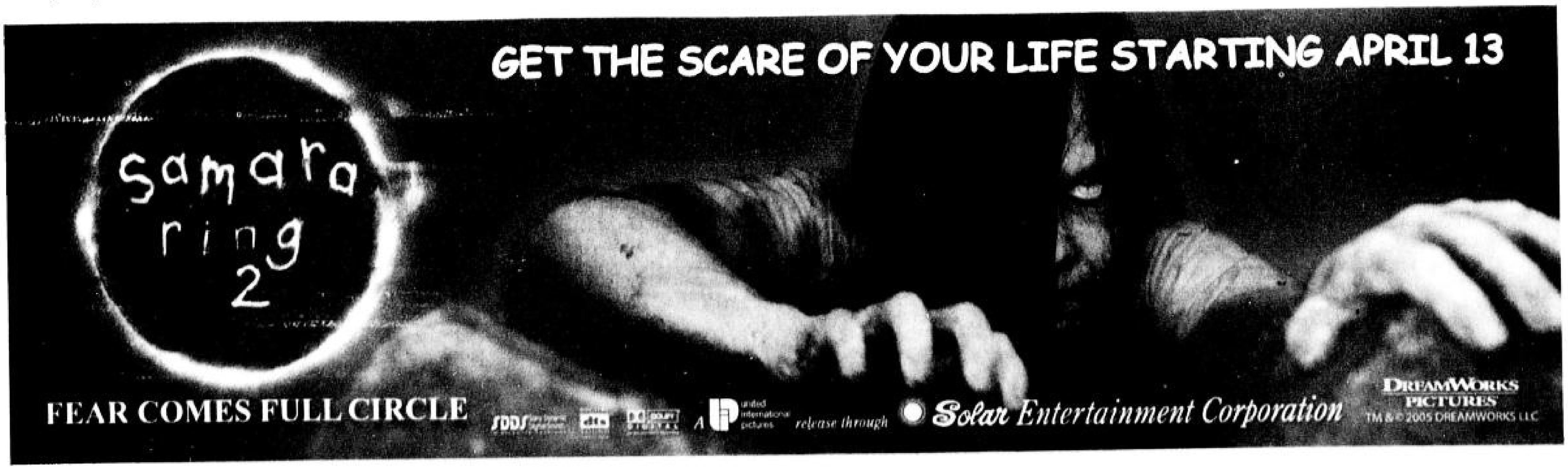
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FEAR COMES FULL CIRCLE
united international pictures
release through
Solar Entertainment Corporation
DreamWorks Pictures
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'Rok On!' for online gamers

SPIN CITY

ONLINE game publisher Level Up! is set to release this month a new CD soundtrack for online gamers.

The company's maiden foray into the music scene, "Rok On!" is a special collection of original music by the country's most exciting bands. There are six songs written expressly for online game enthusiasts, especially Ragnarok players.

"Gaming has been a truly multifaceted experience for us, and music seems like a natural progression," said Sheila Paul, head of marketing. "We've always been supportive of the local music industry, but this is our first album. We started with music videos for Slapshock and Sugar Free and, for our biggest episode last year, we released a song by 7 Shots. Music perfectly suits our gamers' lifestyles."

Featuring catchy tunes from such bands as Moonstar88 ("Pag-ibig Ko sa 'Yo") and Kamikaze ("Chiksilog"), the collection also includes the theme song for the upcoming Ragnarok Philippine Championships, "A Different Kind," performed by the band Kjwan.

Other participating bands are Typecast, Sun Valley Crew and 7 Shots.

"The songs and the bands are representative of the PRO (Philippine Ragnarok Online) community," Paul said. "It's about love, humor, competitiveness, friendship ... everything that one experiences with the vibrant characters and interesting situations in the highly imaginative and creative gaming circles, as well as in one's life."

Love Songs by Chicago

CHICAGO has written and recorded some of the best-loved songs in pop music history.

Now, for the first time, Chicago's 18 biggest hits have been put together in a single collection simply titled "Love Songs."

Since being formed 38 years ago as Chicago Transit Authority, the band has sold 122 million records.

In 1976 the band scored the worldwide top hit "If You Leave Me Now," which earned it a Grammy. It remains one of the biggest-selling singles of all time. The collection also carries "Hard To Say I'm Sorry/Get Away," "You're The Inspiration." "Look Away" and "Hard Habit To Break."

"Love Songs" also has two previously unreleased live recordings—a version of "If You Leave Me Now" by Philip Bailey of Earth, Wind & Fire, and a take on EWF's "After The Love Has Gone" byChicago's Bill Champlin.

"Love Songs," released by Warner Music Philippines, is now available at all leading record bars nationwide.

DARK FIGURES o

Single star in North

From page A2-8

1930s who rises to become a revolutionary heroine fighting the Japanese, North Korea's former colonial masters who remain a target of fierce government propaganda.

"The people who lost their country are no better than dogs so we should resist the foreign forces that deprive us, especially the Japs," a softly spoken middle-aged female studio guide says through an interpreter.

In charge

In the mural, a youthful looking Kim, who was appointed director of the government's Bureau of Propaganda and Agitation in the 1970s, stands proudly on a hilltop dressed in a grey suit with his arms crossed over his chest.

Below him a film crew record a fierce hand-to-hand battle, while smoke and flames rise up out of the carnage. Although a director is in the background, Kim is clearly the man in charge.

"In order to make 'The Sea of Blood' a masterpiece, he gave meticulous guidance from scenario to shooting on 124 occasions," the government-controlled Korean Central News Agency wrote in 1997.

On another wall of the same room is a plaque that records
Kim's visits to the
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2 HITCH
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2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED

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2 CLOSER
3 PACIFIER

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4 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

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1 (SDDS) TERRORIST HUNTER
2 TAMPISAW
3 BENEATH LOCHNESS
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2 MISS CONGENIALITY
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4 HAPLOS
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LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

OP

From page A2-8

The picture put me in touc
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SpongeBob goes there for

Sahara

Directed by Breck Eisner
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BASED on a Clive Cussler
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SPECIAL GUEST

Fantasia Barrino, last year's "American Idol" winner, returns to the show tomorrow as special guest performer. Also find out which AI 4 finalist will be sent home this week. On Star World 4 p.m. and 8 p.m., and ABC 5, 10 p.m. Join Asia Votes and get a chance to win a trip to Los Angeles. Log on to www.startv.com/idol.

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ma has the task of contributing to the development of people to be true communists and to the revolutionization and working-classization of the whole of society." "In order to carry out this historic task successfully, it is necessary... to completely eradicate capitalist elements."

However, Kim is reportedly a famously fanatical film buff with Western tastes.

According to Western media reports, he has between 15,000 and 20,000 movies in his personal collection, many of which are the same Hollywood fare that audiences in the United States have watched over the years.

Strict diet

For the average North Korean though, their cultural diet remains a strict feed of revolutionary propaganda.

At Pyongyang's main theatre, the operatic version of "The Sea of Blood" is the only show in town and plays three to four times a week, according to a government translator who is a permanent shadow for visiting journalists.

The heroine is etched into the stone facade of the theatre, wearing a flowing grey dress and a determined stare while pointing a gun into the air. *AFP*

ENS ON APRIL 8

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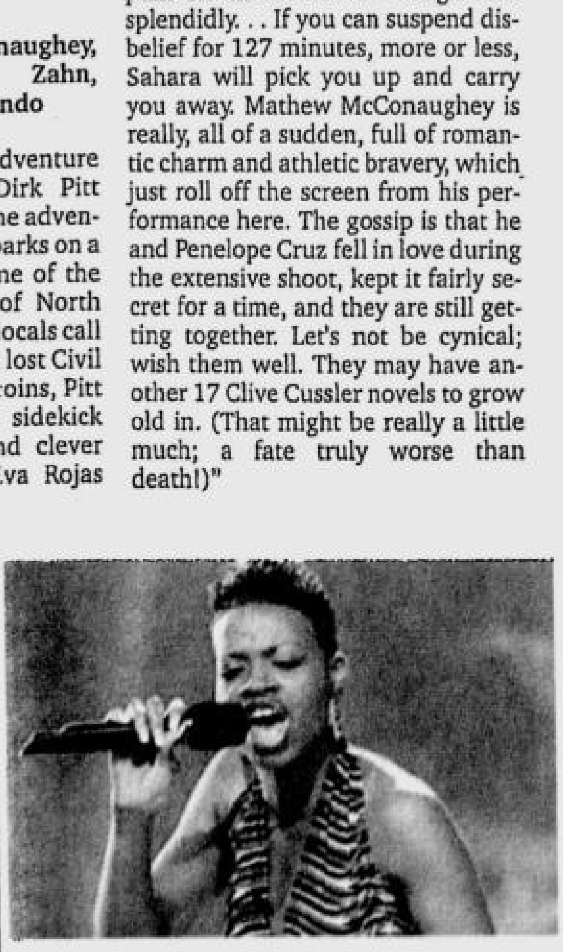
(Cruz) who believes the ship may be linked to mysterious deaths in the very same area.

Since the worldwide release is on April 8, the only review available on imdb.com is by macresarf1 from San Francisco: "Breck Eisner directs solidly . . . The fact that he is the Son of Evil Michael Eisner, retiring president of Disney Corp., may be an example of nepotism, but young Eisner pulls off his first feature assignment splendidly. . . If you can suspend disbelief for 127 minutes, more or less, Sahara will pick you up and carry you away. Mathew McConaughey is really, all of a sudden, full of romantic charm and athletic bravery, which just roll off the screen from his performance here. The gossip is that he and Penelope Cruz fell in love during the extensive shoot, kept it fairly secret for a time, and they are still getting together. Let's not be cynical; wish them well. They may have another 17 Clive Cussler novels to grow old in. (That might be really a little much; a fate truly worse than death!)"



Pinoy thespians wow Alaska

FILIPINO stage actor Bernardo Bernardo joins Fil-American actors Paolo Montalban, Melody Butiu and Eileen Rivera as the lead characters in the "The Long Season," a new musical being staged at the Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, Alaska, until April 10. Book and lyrics are by award-winning playwright Chay Yew, music by Fabian Obispo, under the direction of Joseph Papp Public Theater's artistic producer, Peter Dubois

"Stories of Alaskeros, or migrants who came to work in in the canneries of Alaska, are as compelling and important as any that have inspired the dramatic foundation of the great musicals of the last 50 years," Dubois said.

Montalban essays the role of the idealistic Alaskero, Allos, facing the challenges of a bleak new world. His life takes a dangerous turn via a forbidden relationship with Belen (Butiu), the corrupt foreman Conrado's (Bernardo) wife.

"The Long Season" is sponsored by Alaska's Allen Foundation for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation's Multi-Arts Production Fund, Nathan Cummings Foundation and the National Endowment of the Arts.

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GP

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GP

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MTRCB: GP
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MTRCB. R-13
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11:25 FS / 1:55 MF / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35 / 10:15 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:25 END
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sm cebu cinema 1
ASSUALT ON PRECINCT 13
12:00 MF / 1:54 / 3:48 / 7:36 / 9:15 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:05 END
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4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 CLOSER
6 HOSTAGE
7 BOOGEYMAN
8 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
9 THE PACIFIER
10 RESERVED
11 RESERVED
12 RESERVED

sm city fairview
1 BOOGEYMAN
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 HOSTAGE
4 THE PACIFIER
5 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
6 HIDE AND SEEK
7 CLOSER
8 ROBOTS
9 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
10 ALONE IN THE DARK
11 BE COOL
12 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD

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7 THE PACIFIER
8 HIDE AND SEEK
9 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
10 BOOGEYMAN

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1 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
2 CLOSER
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 SHIRI smcinemaexclusive
6 BOOGEYMAN
7 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
8 LOVE ME IF YOU DARE smcinemaexclusive
9 THE PACIFIER
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3 HIDE AND SEEK
4 CLOSER

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1 RESERVED
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4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 THE PACIFIER
2 HIDE AND SEEK
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 CLOSER

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 HOSTAGE
2 ALONE IN THE DARK
3 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
4 BE COOL
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6 HITCH

sm city baguio
1 HOSTAGE
2 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3 CONFIDENCE
4 RAY

sm city batangas
1 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
2 HOSTAGE
3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2

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1 BE COOL
2 CLOSER
3 ALONE IN THE DARK
4 THE PACIFIER

sm city marilao
1 THE PACIFIER
2 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 ALONE IN THE DARK
4 HOSTAGE

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1 ALONE IN THE DARK
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3 CLOSER
4 HIDE AND SEEK
5 THE PACIFIER
6 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7 SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
8 SHIRI smcinemaexclusive

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1 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
2 RACING STRIPES
3 BUNSHINSABA
4 HITCH

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2 HITCH
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 BUNSHINSABA
6 CONFIDENCE
7 HOSTAGE
8 RACING STRIPES

sm city iloilo
1 HITCH
2 RESERVED
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5 THE FINAL CUT
6 HOSTAGE
7 RESERVED
8 CURSED

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1 THE FINAL CUT
2 CUSED
3 SON OF THE MASK 2
4 RAY
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6 HITCH

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4 CLOSER
5 ASTERIX AND OBELIX
6 THE PACIFIER
7 TERRORIST HUNTER
8 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
9 HITCH
10 BOOGEYMAN

ERMITA
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2 BOOGEYMAN
3 THE PACIFIER
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
5 CLOSER
6 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
7 HIDE AND SEEK

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3 BOOGEYMAN
4 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
5 THE PACIFIER
6 CLOSER
7 HIDE AND SEEK
8 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

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1 THE PACIFIER
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 HIDE AND SEEK
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2
5 ALONE IN THE DARK
6 CLOSER
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

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2 SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS
3 HIDE AND SEEK
4 MS. CONGENIALITY 2

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5 ROBOTS

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2 CURSED
3 HOSTAGE
4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5 NANG NAK

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3 BUNSHINSABA
4 ALONE IN THE DARK
5 HOSTAGE

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2 CURSED
3 THE PACIFIER
4 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	2 THE PACIFIER	3 THX CLOSER GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 BOOGEYMAN	5 BE COOL	6 HIDE & SEEK	7 MS. CONGENIALITY 2	
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GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX CLOSER GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX HIDE & SEEK GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 MS. CONGENIALITY 2 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE PACIFIER GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS GUARANTEED SEATS		
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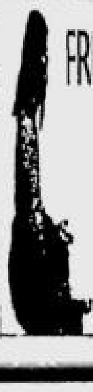

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3 vie for slot in Pinoy music website

THREE talented young musical artists—Aujan Lazaro, Mitch Ballesca and Floridet Abucayan—will soon be heard on "Freelancing @ Wave 89.1" singing their very own compositions.

Auj, Mish and Lori are the top three finalists in the contest sponsored by Fiesta Mundo, the country's first digital portal for original Filipino music.

Via "Freelancing," Fiesta Mundo hopes to give undiscovered talents the opportunity to share their music with the world through free airplays online.

The coveted prizes include an EP (extended play) CD to be produced by Fiestamundo.com and an Artist Space and feature spot in the website.

Auj's entry, "My Love," is a mellow jazz number reminiscent of Norah Jones; Mish's is "Open Your Eyes," and Lori's "I Need to Let Go," is a song about lost love.

The winner will be determined by text votes, with the various phone numbers being announced intermittently on radio.

"Freelancing," the contest, is a tie-up between Fiesta Mundo and FM station Wave 89.1. Another Fiesta tie-up with MTV allows chosen artists to shoot their first videos to be aired on "MTV Lokal."

MITCH Ballesca

FLORIDET Abucayan

AUJAN Lazaro

Urgent matters ...

From page A2-1

We became close after our ["Night of the Champions"] US tour last year.

Do you date?

When time permits, we watch movies or have dinner. Most of the time, we hang out at home. I went to his house also last Holy Week, when we passed by Cavite. A few days before Valentine's Day, Christian gave me a silver butterfly necklace. A lot of people reacted—diamond *daw*—but its just custom jewelry. If ever, Christian would be my first boyfriend. Yes, first.

How has show biz changed your life?

I became really busy. I've had to sacrifice a lot, including time with family and friends. I also had to give up school. I wanted to enroll this school year, but I was told "Champions" would be touring the US again before the year ends. I wanted to take up Communication Arts, but I took up International Business last year [at the San Sebastian College] instead. I'd like to prepare for my future. I want to put up a business of my own.

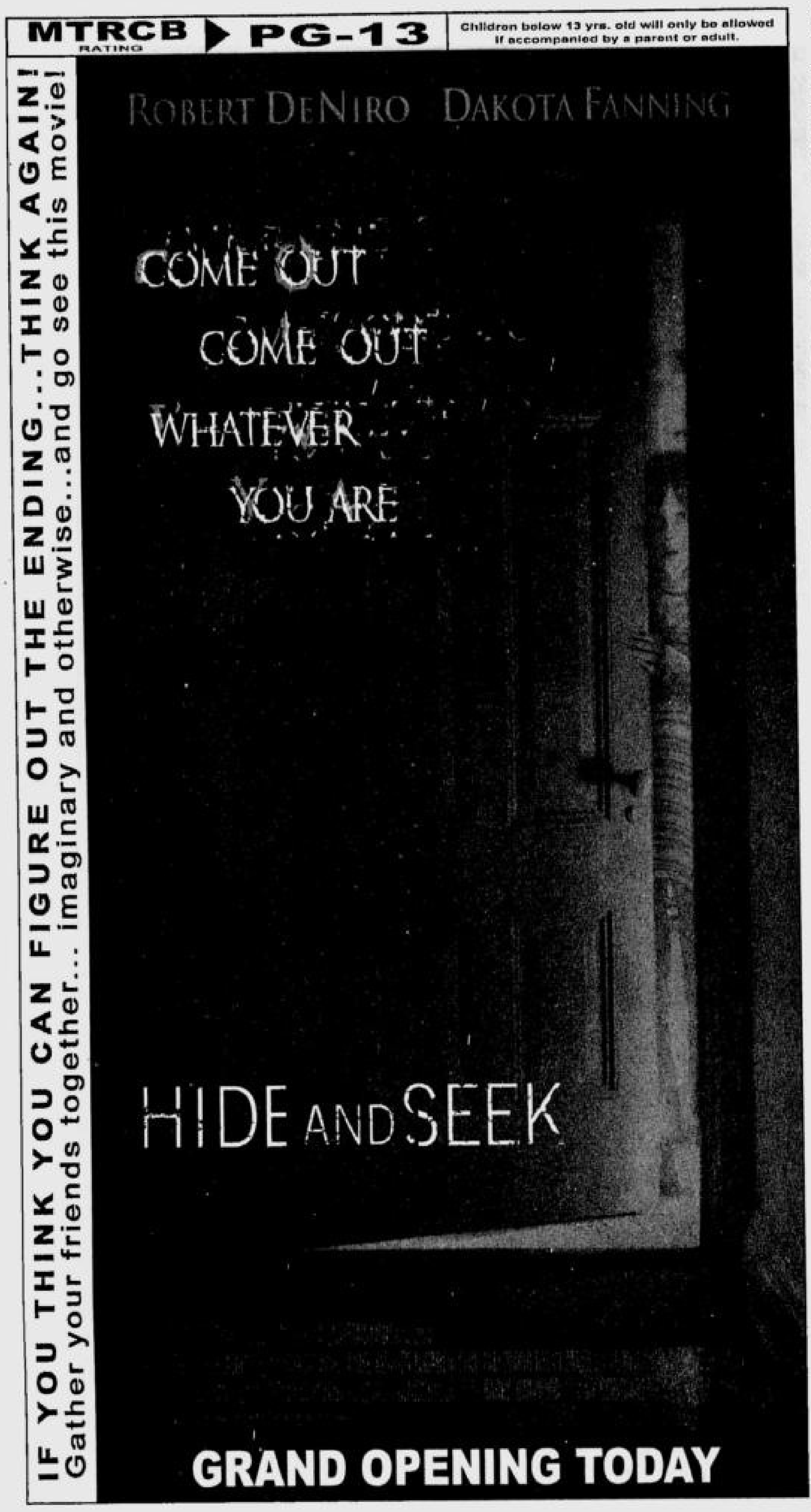
What are your immediate goals?

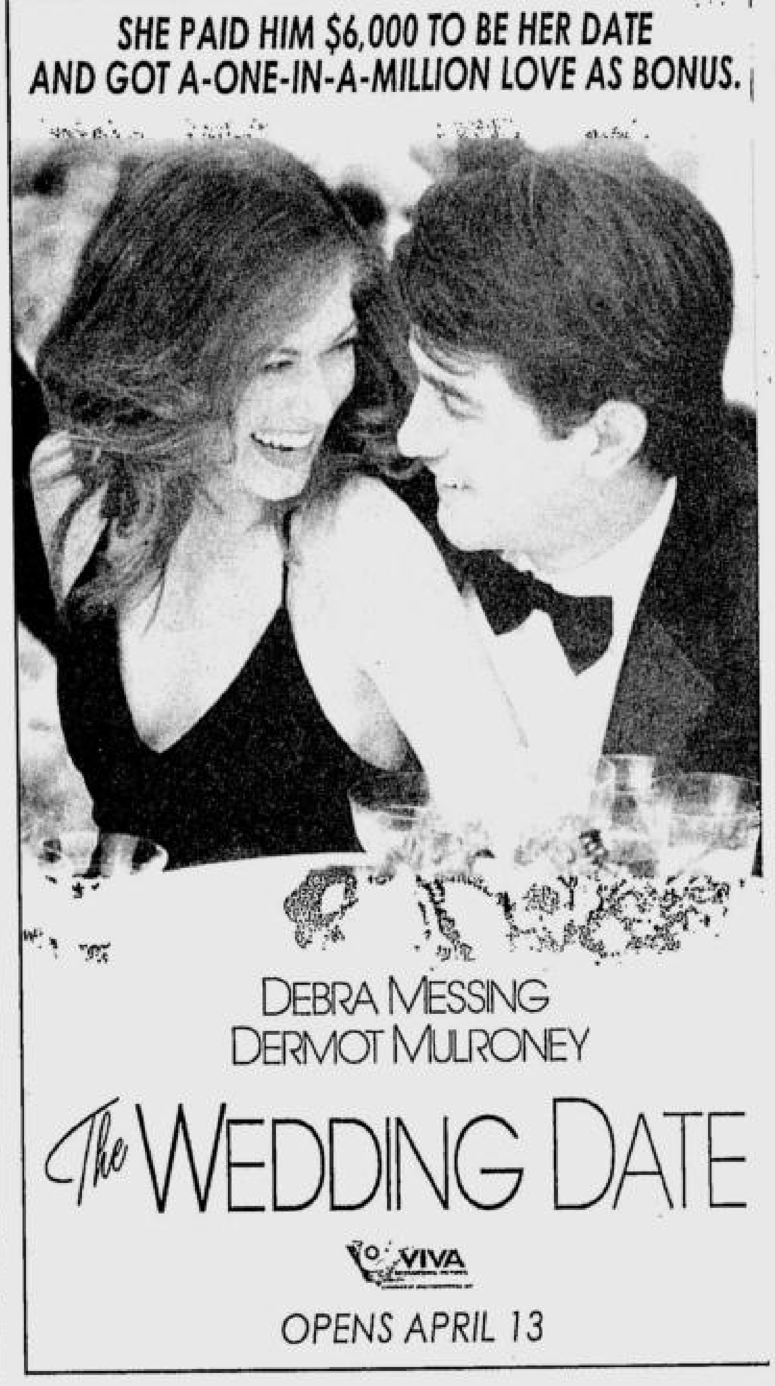
I'd like to take up voice lessons again, and learn how to play the drums. I might play the drums during my show at the Aliw Theater, so I'd like to practice. I also want to learn to play the piano so I can compose.

How do you wish to improve your singing?

I want to learn Lea Salonga's technique; she doesn't get tired easily. I think I have a heart problem. I find it hard to breathe, I have palpitations... Once I collapsed after only two songs—and they weren't even hard songs to sing. I've taken [the necessary] exams, but they still can't tell what it is. We have to know for sure before I go onstage again.

(Rachelle Ann Go celebrates her first anniversary in show biz with a show titled "Ultimate Champion" at the Aliw Theater on April 29. Call 687 1125)


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
IF YOU THINK YOU CAN FIGURE OUT THE ENDING...THINK AGAIN!
Gather your friends together... imaginary and otherwise...and go see this movie!
GRAND OPENING TODAY


SHE PAID HIM $6,000 TO BE HER DATE
AND GOT A-ONE-IN-A-MILLION LOVE AS BONUS.
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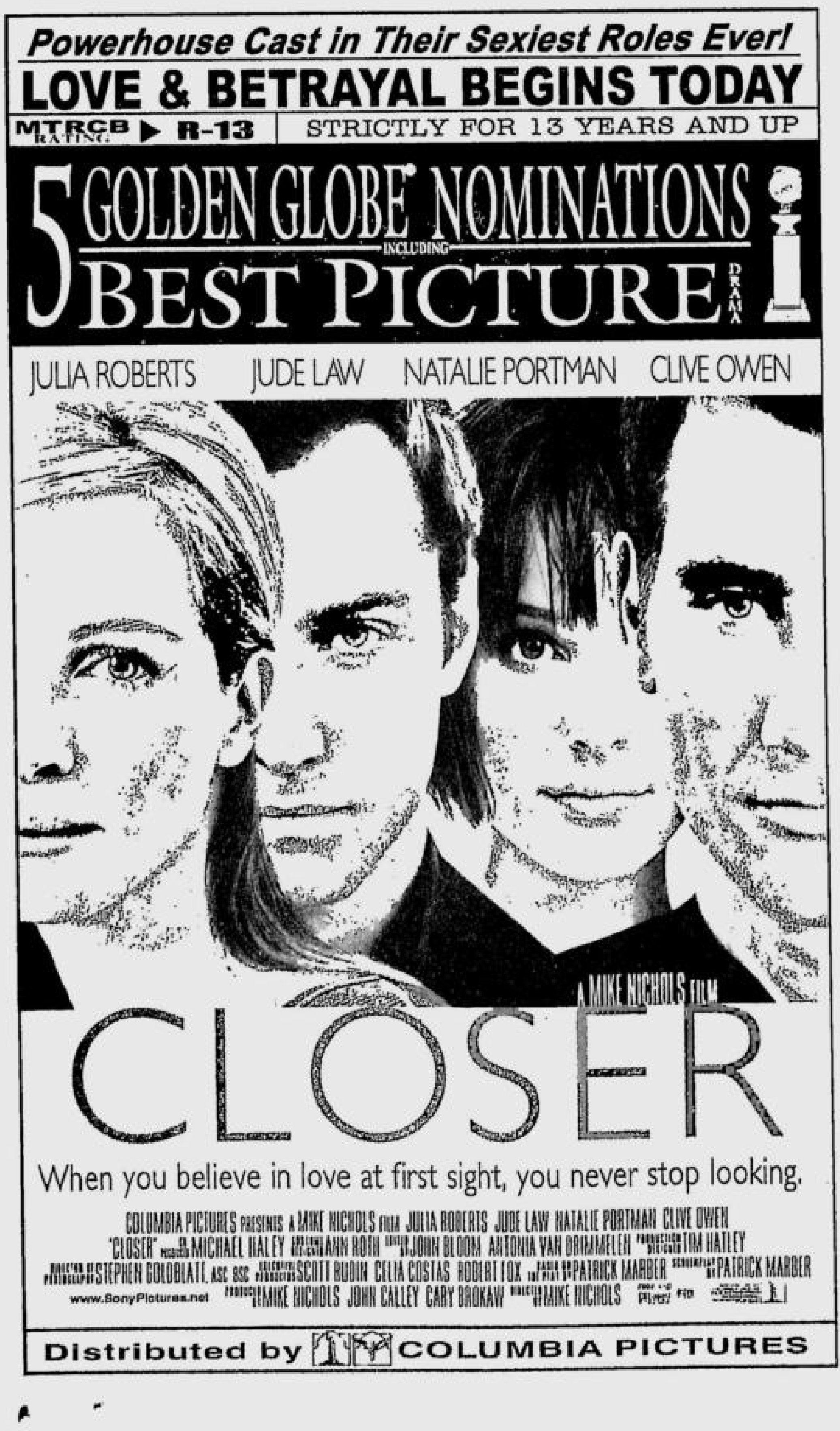
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In this film, Caesar gives Detritus an ultimatum: find a way to conquer the Gauls or he'll find his way inside the stomach of the lions. Detritus comes up with a plan to kidnap Getafix the Druid, creator of the magic potion which enables the Gauls to be temporarily invincible. Meanwhile, the Romans' tax collection chest winds up in the village and con-man Prolix is out to trick them all. Obelix is in love with Panacea who loves someone else. A new magic potion is developed with "double" the punch. The Roman centurion X'mas Bonus once again reluctantly sends his soldiers to do battle with the Gauls (he knows he's bound to lose, anyway). Betrayals, battles, and funny escapades abound! And where is Asterix in all this? You'll just have to watch how everyone's favorite Gaul will save the day!
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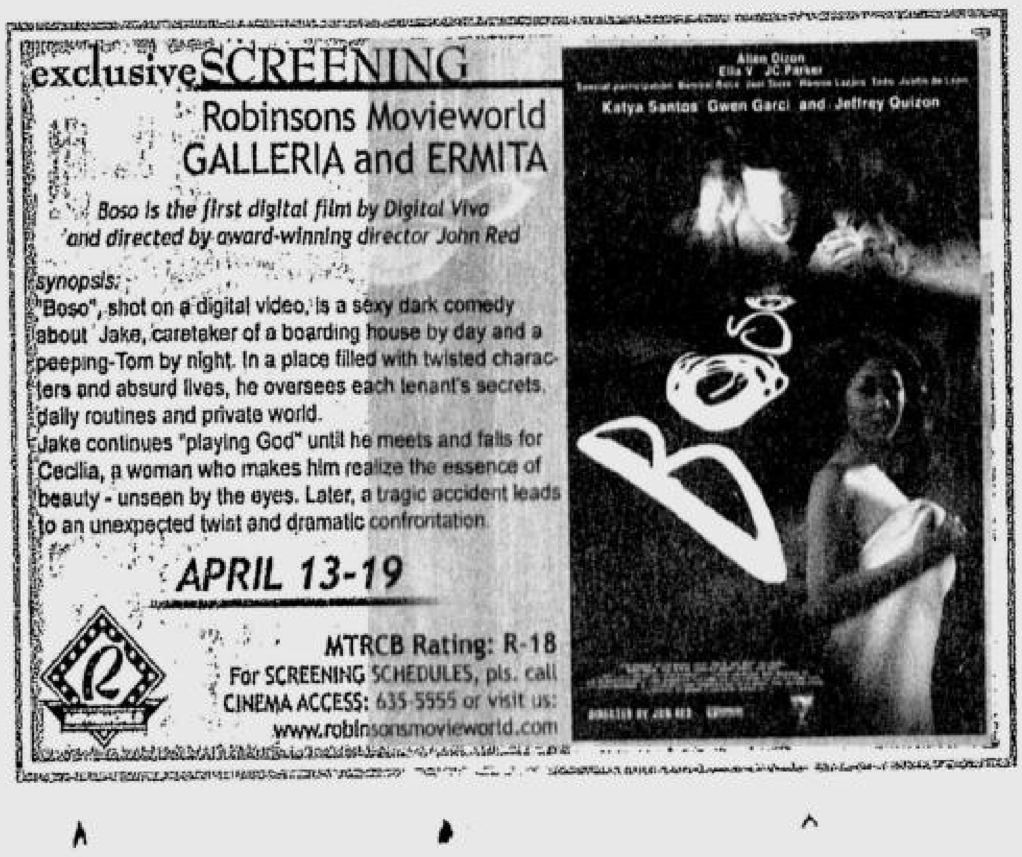
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GALLERIA and ERMITA
Boso is the first digital film by Digital Viva and directed by award-winning director John Red
synopsis:
"Boso", shot on a digital video, is a sexy dark comedy about Jake, caretaker of a boarding house by day and a peeping-Tom by night. In a place filled with twisted characters and absurd lives, he oversees each tenant's secrets, daily routines and private world.
Jake continues "playing God" until he meets and falls for Cecilia, a woman who makes him realize the essence of beauty - unseen by the eyes. Later, a tragic accident leads to an unexpected twist and dramatic confrontation.
APRIL 13-19
MTRCB Rating: R-18
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Will Smith, Adam Sandler, Queen Latifah lead Kids Choice awardees

CHEER FACTOR

LOS ANGELES—The green slime poured down on celebrities and fans alike Saturday night at a raucous 18th annual Kids Choice Awards broadcast on the Nickelodeon children's cable network.

Rapper-actor Will Smith kicked off the evening with a spirited performance of the song "Switch" accompanied by a supporting cast that included breakdancers and throngs of people in feathered costumes.

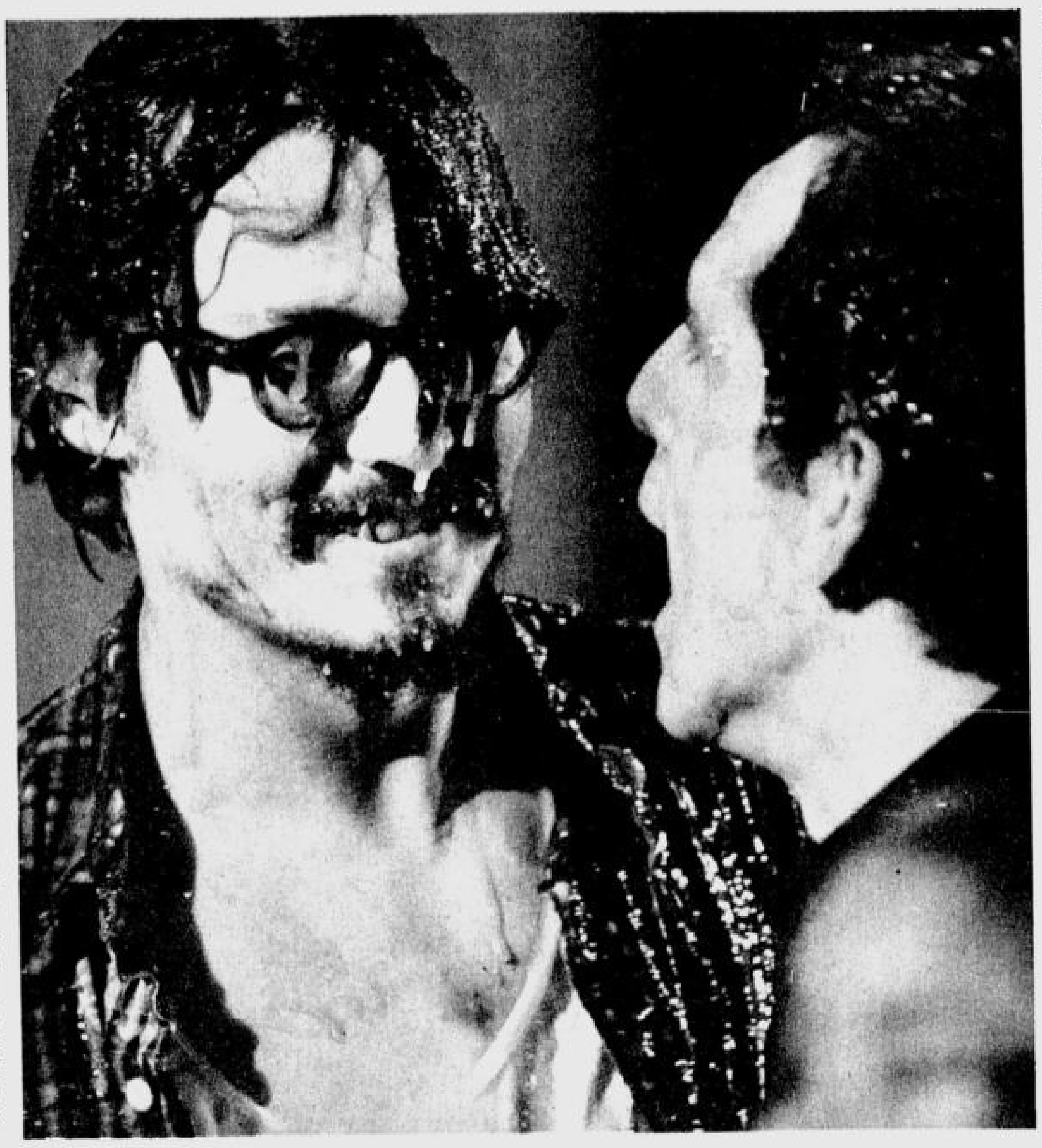
Host Ben Stiller arrived in a tricked-out miniature convertible, dressed from head to toe in a silver jumpsuit that he said would prevent him from being that year's celebrity slime victim.

Last year's co-host, Cameron Diaz, immediately pelted him with cream pies.

Between bouts of silliness, a number of awards were handed out, including the "Wannabe Award," for the celebrity whom kids most want to be like. This year's trophy, a silver blimp, went to Queen Latifah, who was introduced by Halle Berry.

"Her accomplishments are mind boggling and span the world of entertainment," Berry said. "There's a famous expression that goes, 'It's good to be king.' Well, I'd like to add that it's real good to be queen."

A giddy Latifah seemed delighted by the award, holding it over her head and shouting, "I get a blimp. I thank all of you so much for letting me do what I do for a living," she said.


JOHNNY Depp and Ben Stiller all slimed up

WILL Smith with daughter Willow Camille Reign

QUEEN Latifah, Wannabe Award

ADAM Sandler

Top winners

Favorite Movie: "The Incredibles"

Favorite Voice from an Animated Movie: Will Smith, "Shark Tale"

Favorite Movie Actor: Adam Sandler, "50 First Dates"

Favorite Movie Actress: Hilary Duff, "A Cinderella Story"

Favorite Music Group: Green Day

Favorite Male Singer: Usher

Favorite Female Singer: Avril Lavigne

Favorite Television Show: "American Idol"

Favorite Cartoon: "SpongeBob SquarePants"

Favorite Television Actor: Romeo, "Romeo!"

Favorite Television Actress: Raven Symone, "That's So Raven"

Favorite Athlete: Tony Hawk

Favorite Video Game: "Shrek 2"

Favorite Book: "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events"

Most of the celebrity winners offered brief words of thanks, but Usher and Smith delivered advice to their young fans.

"Make sure you brush your teeth, say your prayers, [take] your vitamins," Usher told the audience of some 10,000 screaming youngsters at UCLA's Pauley Pavilion. "You can be anything you want to be in life. All you have to do is believe in yourself."

Smith insisted that the audience quiet down and listen after he accepted his award from his wife, Jada Pinkett-Smith, and Chris Rock. He encouraged the crowd to make reading a habit, telling them that books contain all the answers they will ever need.

"There is no problem you can have that some person hasn't had before and solved," and then written about, he said.

Will Ferrell was the evening's first slime victim, having buckets of the green goo dumped on him after he challenged soccer star Mia Hamm to a soccer kickoff.

Later, the audience got it after the punk-pop group Simple Plan finished their song, "Shut Up." They told the audience they would do another song, but had rigged their instruments to spray green slime, which they fired on the crowd.

The evening concluded with Johnny Depp coming onstage supposedly to slime Stiller, but getting the green goo dumped on himself. Stiller, saying he was jealous, dove onto the stage and rolled in the slime.

Award winners are chosen by fans who vote up until the day of the show, casting ballots online, by phone and through Nickelodeon's magazine. *AP*

USHER

PAULA Abdul, Simon Cowell and his girlfriend Terri Seymour

OPENING TODAY

Closer

Directed by Mike Nichols
Stars Julia Roberts, Jude Law, Natalie Portman, Clive Owen

SET IN contemporary London, this is the story of four strangers (Roberts, Law, Portman and Owen), their chance meetings, instant attractions and casual betrayals.

Jack Garner wrote this Dec. 3, 2004 review for the Democrat and Chronicle: "'Closer' is coolly stylish and artfully directed. It's easily Nichols' best theatrical feature since the glory days of 'The Graduate' and 'Virginia Woolf.' (I say theatrical, because Nichols' recent HBO films 'Wit' and 'Angels in America' are both fabulous.) 'Closer' is refreshingly adult as it refuses to offer pat answers or rosy conclusions. The film is an emotional Rorschach test for viewers, suggesting a sadly diminishing role for affection and trust in modern relationships. As Dan tells Anna, 'What's so great about the truth? Try lying for a change—it's the currency of the world.'"

The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie

Directed by Stephen Hillenburg
Features the voices of Tom Kenny (SpongeBob), Scarlett Johansson (Mindy), Alec Baldwin (Dennis), David Hasselhoff (Himself)

THERE'S trouble brewing in Bikini Bottom. Someone has stolen King Neptune's crown, and it looks like Mr. Krab, SpongeBob's boss, is the culprit. Though he's just been passed over for the promotion of his dreams, SpongeBob stands by his boss, and along with his best pal Patrick, sets out on a treacherous mission to Shell City to reclaim the crown and save Mr. Krab's life.

David Sterritt, film critic of The Christian Science Monitor, wrote: "I'll admit it. I'm a few decades older than the primary demographic of 'The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie.' I'll also admit I had a great time [watching the movie]. Why? I'll admit that, too.

OPENING/ A2-4

US moviegoers descend on 'Sin City'

LOS ANGELES—"Sin City" proved an irresistible temptation for audiences as the highly stylized comic-book adaptation led the weekend box office with a $28.1 million debut.

Opening in second place was Queen Latifah's comedy "Beauty Shop," a spinoff of the "Barbershop" franchise, which took in $13.5 million for the weekend, according to industry estimates Sunday. Since opening Wednesday, "Beauty Shop" had grossed $17.3 million.

Overall, movie revenues slipped for the sixth straight weekend. The top 12 movies took in $98.3 million, down 14 percent from the same weekend last year, when "Hellboy" and "Walking Tall" opened on top of the box office.

The slump follows a healthy start to 2005 in which movie revenues had surged about 10 percent ahead of 2004's. Revenues now are running even with last year's at about $2 billion heading into Hollywood's busy season.

"Summer's coming, and summer better save the day," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "Better to have a slow pre-summer than a slow summer, I guess."

"Sin City" is adapted from Frank Miller's noir-ish comics in a wicked town filled with tough guys and gorgeous dames. The movie's huge cast includes Bruce Willis, Mickey Rourke, Benicio Del Toro, Jessica Alba, Rosario Dawson, Clive Owen, Elijah Wood, Alexis Bledel and Brittany Murphy.

Director Robert Rodriguez, who had Miller on the set as co-director, shot the actors against green-screen backgrounds, adding the jutting buildings, shadowy interiors and other backdrops later through computer-generated imagery.

"Beauty Shop" stars Latifah reprising the hairdresser role she originated in "Barbershop 2: Back in Business," this time opening her own salon filled with wacky employees and customers.

With females making up two-thirds of the audience, Erik Lomis, MGM head of distribution, noted: "Females, they don't rush out to the movies the first weekend, so I think this one's going to hang around for a while."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations:

1) "Sin City," $28.1 million
2) "Beauty Shop," $13.5 million
3) "Guess Who," $13 million
4) "Robots," $10 million
5) "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous," $8.4 million
6) "The Pacifier," $6.1 million
7) "The Ring 2," $5.8 million
8) "The Upside of Anger," $4.1 million
9) "Hitch," $3 million
10) "Ice Princess," $2.6 million

AP

Single star in North Korean Hollywood

PYONGYANG—In North Korea's version of Hollywood, there is room for only one star, the nation's "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-Il—movie buff extraordinaire, scriptwriter and casting agent all rolled into one.

And just as Kim is small in stature—he stands five foot two inches without his reputed six-inch heels—so is North Korea's film industry, which churns out about 40 movies a year on budgets that Julia Roberts would not get out of bed for.

North Korea's state-run Korean Feature Film Studio is a dour 10.7 million-square-feet, military-guarded block of land about 15 minutes drive outside of the capital, Pyongyang.

Dominating the main entrance hall is an enormous mural of Kim overseeing production of one of the North Korean government's favorite movies, "The Sea of Blood."

The film is a tale of a woman farmer in the

SINGLE/ A2-4

LOOK WHO'S TALKING
Tonight on ABC 5's "Look Who's Talking": Johnny Litton talks to Pinky Amador about Repertory Philippines after the passing of Zeneida Amador. Litton's co-hosts are Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Anton San Diego. Other guests are Miguel Faustmann and Joy Virata.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2005
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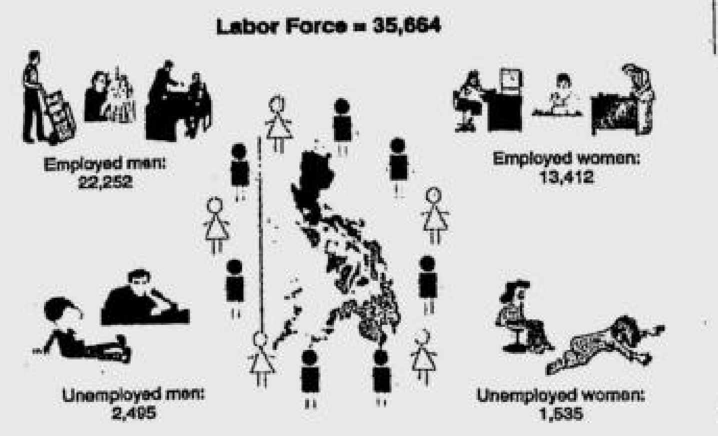
March inflation remains at a high 8.5%

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Labor force by gender
(January 2005, in thousands)



Source: National Statistical Coordination Board

WOMEN account for only 37.6 percent of the country's over 35.6 million labor force. And of the 13.4 million women, 11.4 percent or over 1.5 million are unemployed.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

By Michelle V. Remo

INFLATION remained at a relatively high rate of 8.5 percent in March, the same with the February level, as the continued increase in oil prices led to the accelerated rise in the cost of commodities.

The March inflation rate was within the 8- to 8.6-percent forecast of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for the month, but was still much higher than the government's full-year target of 5 to 6 percent.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that while the increase in the prices of food items decelerated, their movement was offset by an accelerated increase in the prices of non-food products.

Inflation for food, beverage and tobacco (FBT), and for fuel, light and water (FLW) slipped to 7.2 percent and 18.3 percent, respectively. But inflation for clothing rose to 3.7 percent in March from 3.5 percent in February; housing and repairs, to 4.7 percent from 4.5 percent; and services, to 14 percent from 13.4 percent. Inflation for miscellaneous items remained at its February rate of 3.1 percent.

For food alone, inflation eased to 7.4 percent in March from 7.8 percent the previous month. Slower rates were seen in the prices of corn, cereal preparations, eggs, fish, fruits and vegetables and meat.

"We expect inflation to be high in the first half because of a low base during the same period last year," said National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri. In March 2004, inflation was at only 4.2 percent.

NERI

Saying inflation is expected to decelerate in the second half of the year, the Neda chief said it was not advisable for the government to undertake price-control mechanisms because the upward movement of prices was still largely caused by problems on the supply side.

"Inflation was basically driven by oil prices," said Scholastica Cororaton, head of Neda's policy and planning division. She said fuel prices rose by an average of 18.2 percent in March from only 16.9 percent in February.

The increase in oil prices led to the accelerated inflation for some food items on a month-on-month basis, such as corn, rice and meat.

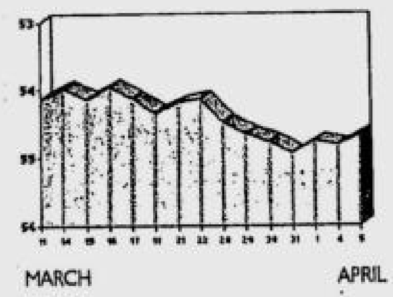
But the government said there was no need to change the inflation target for the full year, as the inflation environment may improve in the second half.

"This is basically factor driven -by oil prices. I am hopeful that oil prices will ease as the Western world enters its summer months. Nevertheless we need to monitor this closely because this can be a spoiler," said Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

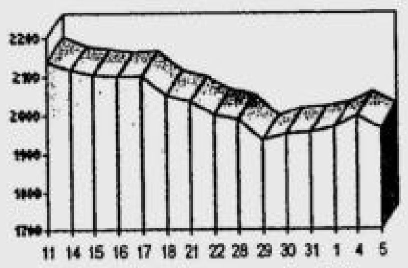
₱ 54.665 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2005

¥ 108.85= $ 1
As of 5 p.m., April 5, 2005

GOLD: $428.30-428.80
per ounce Hong Kong, April 1, 2005

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares end down 1.6%

SHARES ended lower yesterday on a technical correction following recent gains, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed down 31.66 points, or 1.6 percent, at 1,962.70, after gaining 3.2 percent over the previous four sessions, including Monday's 1.4 percent rise.

Investors took profit in SM Investments, which fell 0.4 percent to P237, along with Manila Water, off 1.5 percent at P6.50, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., down 0.7 percent at P1,395, and Ayala Land, down 1.2 percent at P8.60.

All sectors finished lower, except the banks and financial services subindex, which closed higher.

Decliners led gainers 77 to 15, while 39 stocks were unchanged.

"We are going through a consolidation

SHARES/ B4

StanChart optimistic on peso

THE PHILIPPINES has likely seen the worst of sovereign credit downgrades as the government's fiscal consolidation program was now rekindling investor interest and fueling the peso's rally, said a Standard Chartered Bank analyst.

In SCB's global research study dated March 23, Singapore-based foreign exchange strategist Callum Henderson said that after a long period of being off the radar screen, the Philippine peso was seeing renewed investor interest due to the government's successes in passing key fiscal reforms and valuation.

As such, SCB upgraded its forecast on the peso against the US dollar, now expecting the local currency to appreciate to as much as 53 by end-June and to settle at 54 to the US dollar by year's end compared to the previous projections of 56.70 and 57 for the respective periods.

STANCHART/ B5

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No need for tariff-free import of corn yet, says Agri official

By Christine A. Gaylican

THERE is yet no need to import yellow corn at lower tariffs, the Department of Agriculture yesterday said.

According to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap, the corn harvests in Luzon and Mindanao may be enough to offset the perceived shortage in corn supply for the moment.

Local feed millers have cited the shortage in corn supply to seek the tariff-free importation of the grain.

Agriculture authorities fear the erosion of local prices of the grain if the importation of corn pushes through.

Yap on Monday said that the agency would not want to do anything that would affect the prices at the farm gate, currently ranging between P9 to P10.50 per kilo.

"We have to study their (feed millers') proposal," Yap said. "We have to [make them] understand that there is still some harvest to be done in some corn areas. We don't want to do anything that would affect the good prices that our farmers are getting now."

Yap also said that the agency would monitor the movement of the corn supply and, if prices would move unreasonably, authorities would intervene and allow the importation of the grain.

Yap also said that the feed milling industry was in the process of acquiring about 100,000 metric tons of corn substitutes, such as feed wheat from India and China.

"We have to be careful and balance the supply of our yellow corn used primarily for feed production because, six months down the line, the prices of corn will [affect] pork and poultry prices at the wet markets," he said.

Yap added that the price of imported corn must not fall below P10 because it wold drag down farm gate prices.

GONZALEZ

Globe official gets top plum

GLOBE Telecom chief financial officer Delfin C. Gonzalez Jr. was named Best CFO in the Philippines by FinanceAsia in its Asia's Best Companies 2005 Poll.

The opinions and votes of over 200 fund managers and equity analysts had been counted and the results constituted FinanceAsia's annual poll.

Gonzalez joined Globe in November 2000 as CFO. He is also a managing director of Ayala Corp.

BSP seen to lean toward tighter monetary policy

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER over a year of keeping a "neutral" stance on monetary policy, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday signaled a shift toward tightening, citing threats from rising oil prices.

Analysts said the BSP was in effect telling the market to brace for a tighter monetary policy in the near future. They said the BSP might raise either the key overnight rates or the reserve requirement on banks. They also expected the BSP to keep its present policy at least for the month.

"The March inflation rate is within the expected range," BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said. "Our forecast is a decelerating trend, but there are risks to the outlook that can raise inflationary expectations. It is important to prevent this from seeping into the demand side."

Tetangco said these factors would be considered by the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board during its next monthly policy setting tomorrow (April 7).

Since July 2003, the MB has maintained its overnight borrowing or reverse repurchase rate at 6.75 percent, and the overnight lending or repurchase rate at 9 percent.

In a separate interview, Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said there appeared to be a consensus in the domestic financial market that the signaled tightening might not happen any time soon.

"If there will be any movement, the earliest will be ... May or June," Ravelas said, noting that the BSP would likely wait for the April inflation number and the action of the United States Federal Reserve.

"Probably, we're entering a bottoming-out scenario for local interest rate, but that doesn't mean it will rise right away," Ravelas said. "From a neutral bias, there's now a shift to sideways to upward bias (on interest rate) because of inflation."

Ravelas said rising oil prices, coupled with supply side concerns, were aggravating risks on consumer prices.

The country's consumer price index rose 8.5 percent year-on-year in March, which was within the BSP's expected range of 8-8.6 percent.

The International Monetary Fund, in a recent country report, said the BSP must start hiking interest rates "to guide inflationary pressures down."

In its full report on the consultations with the Philippine government released Tuesday, the IMF said about a third of the increase in the headline inflation rate since end-2003 was due to factors other than identifiable supply side pressures.

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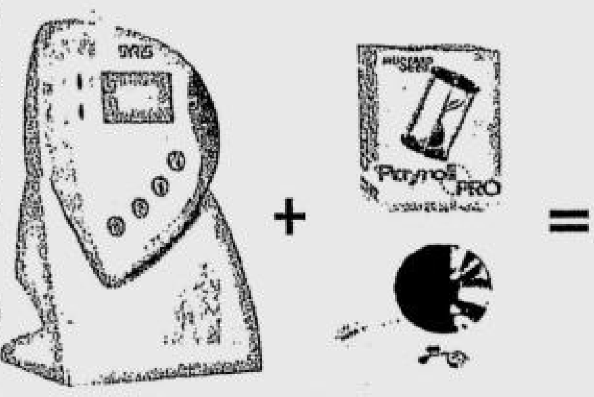

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The accreditation game

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

NOWADAYS, it is not enough to have a government license to be able to do business or practice your profession. You have to be *accredited*. My pocket dictionary defines accredit as: (1) accept as true; (2) confer authority upon.

The accreditation game is being played more widely every year.

For example, you may have a diploma from the Harvard Medical School and pass the board exams with flying colors, but Philhealth will not pay you the prescribed fee, modest as it is, for treating a member unless your name is on the list of accredited physicians. To be accredited, the doctor has to fill up a form and pay an annual fee of something like P1,500.

Doctors just starting out on their careers do not mind qualifying for accreditation. The Philhealth membership is a good source of paying patients, although Philhealth fees are modest. *Mabuti na sa wala.*

An insult

Some doctors with established practices decline to be accredited. I guess they feel that accreditation is an insult. Some go as far as posting a sign on their front doors of their clinics that says, "Philhealth members are not accepted."

It is not enough that a private hospital or lying-in clinic is duly licensed by the Bureau of Hospitals. The hospital or clinic has to qualify for accreditation with Philhealth.

The Insurance Commission has recently decreed that financial statements will not be accepted unless they carry the signatures of auditors accredited with the Commission. You may be the top auditing firm in the country, but you have to apply for accreditation. An application form has been devised that interested auditors will have to fill up.

An insurance company may be the largest in the world and duly licensed by the Insurance Commission to operate in this country for decades, but if the Land Transportation Office (LTO) does not accredit it, the company's certificate of cover (COC) is not worth the paper it is printed on.

Some of these large companies do not bother to qualify. They do not need the COC business and they do not like to play LTO's game. But, every small company in the fringes of the insurance industry is a player and is duly accredited. That should not be too hard for you to figure out.

Playing the game

Some banks play the accreditation game also. I have no quarrel with a bank that accredits an insurance company on the basis of a financial analysis of the company. But the bank has to be careful. One has to have a deep insight of the insurance business to be able to make a solid financial analysis of an insurance company. I remember a bank taking out from its accredited list one of the world's largest international insurance companies simply because the Philippine branch lost money the year before.

Some banks would accredit an insurance company only if it agrees to open an account with the bank. This is the old you-scratch-my-back-and-I-scratch-yours game. But then, a terrible conflict of interest is created. Supposing the insurance company refuses to pay a claim of a borrower-insured? Whose side will the bank be on?

This accreditation game leads me to ask: "Is a government license worth anything anymore?"

Computer breakdown at SSS

The computer system that speeds up the processing of applications for loans and other benefits has broken down. Processing is crawling at a snail's pace. No one seems to know how long the emergency will last.

Fortunately, pensions are not affected by the emergency.

When I go to the bank tomorrow, I expect my money to be there. Otherwise, SSS will hear me screaming all the way from Makati to the Quezon City head office.

Fifty years into the computer age, a breakdown like this is unforgivable. There are experts who can spot and plug the weaknesses of a system.

Apparently, no experts were called in when the system was installed. Some heads at SSS will have to roll.

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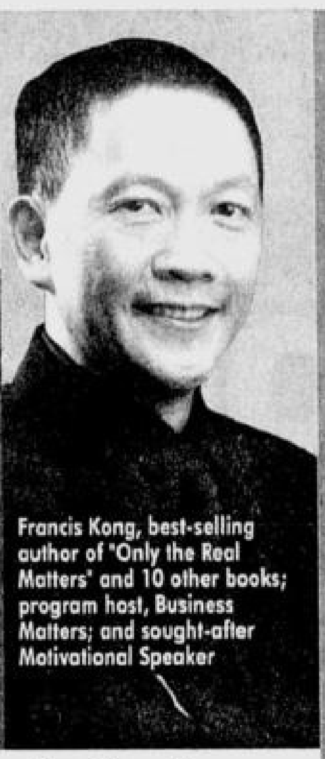

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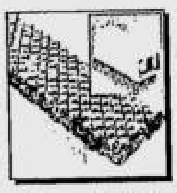

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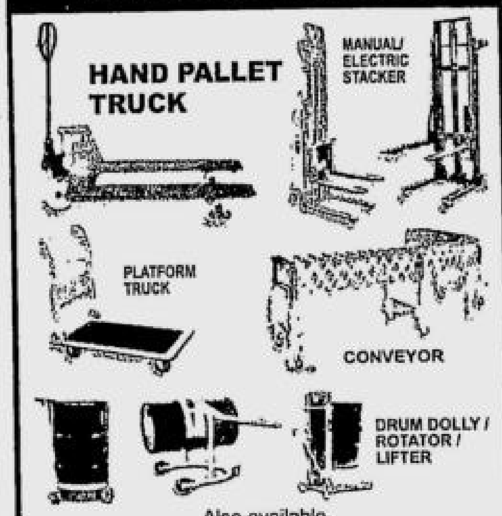

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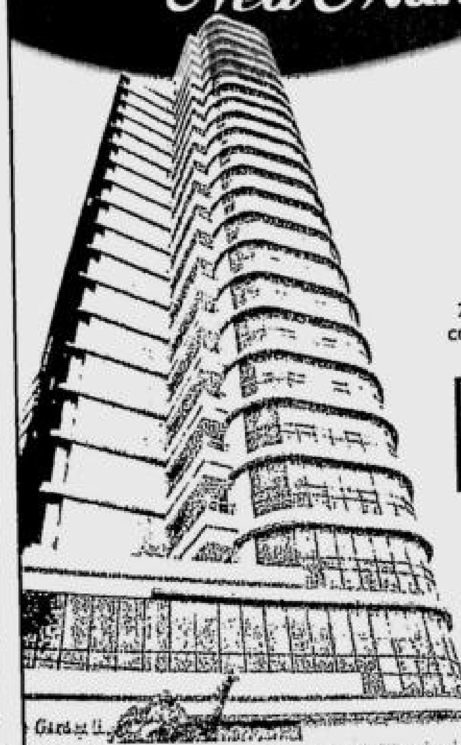

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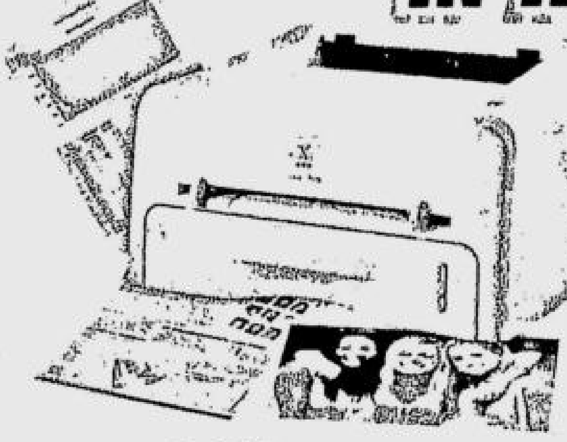

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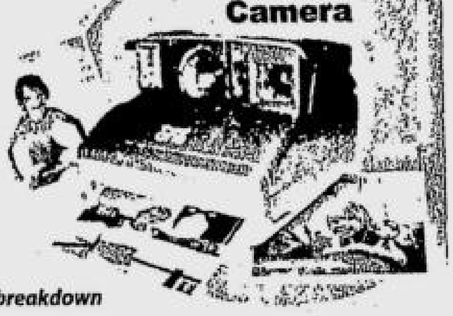

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Compex - Parksquare	9288382
Villman - Parksquare	7527758
Starapple-Makati Cinema	8111422/24
PC Outlet - Glorieta	8923716
Quezon City (Gilmore)	
PC Specialist I	7232950/60
PC Specialist II	4100158
PC City	7051326
PC Outlet	4102829
PC House	7264314
PC Options	4151488
Think PC-IT Plaza	7260535
PC Gilmore	7213496
PC Corner	7232837
Greenhills Carpark	
Acenet Greenhills	7258749

Luzon	
Acecom - Tarlac	(045)9827924
Pinnacle Technology - Bulacan	(044) 6670634
Planet Earth - Vigan	(077) 6320546
Benerson Enterprises - Tarlac	(045) 9823920
Northpoint Computer - Laoag	(077) 7703521
New Ongto Expressmart - Iriga	(054) 2992550
RCA - Cavite	(054) 2995678
RCA - Lucena	(042) 6603899
RCA - Naga	(054) 8118483
Prologue - Laguna	(049) 5362057
PC 4 Me - LaUnion	(072) 888 2249
SKM - La Union	(072) 8885339
Laser Marketing - Baguio	(074) 4425854
PC King - Baguio	(074) 4428357
Visayas	
Delta Merchandising-Iloilo	(033) 3363196
Hardycom - Bacolod	(034) 4338705
Technoshop	(034) 4332136
XCOMP - Cebu	(032)2545186
JOEBZ - Tacloban	(053)3212323
Bacolod Sure Computer Inc.	(034)4351949
Mindanao	
Datavision - Iligan	(063) 221 2973
Global PC Computer - Butuan	(085) 3411188
Columbia Computer - Butuan	(085)3414956
Wren Computer - Davao	(082) 2240052
Digital Interface - Davao	(082) 2272282
Coneco Sales - Cotobato	(064)4218193
Ceejay's Enterprise-Zamboanga	(062)9915350
Columbia Computer - Gen. Santos City	(083)5526231

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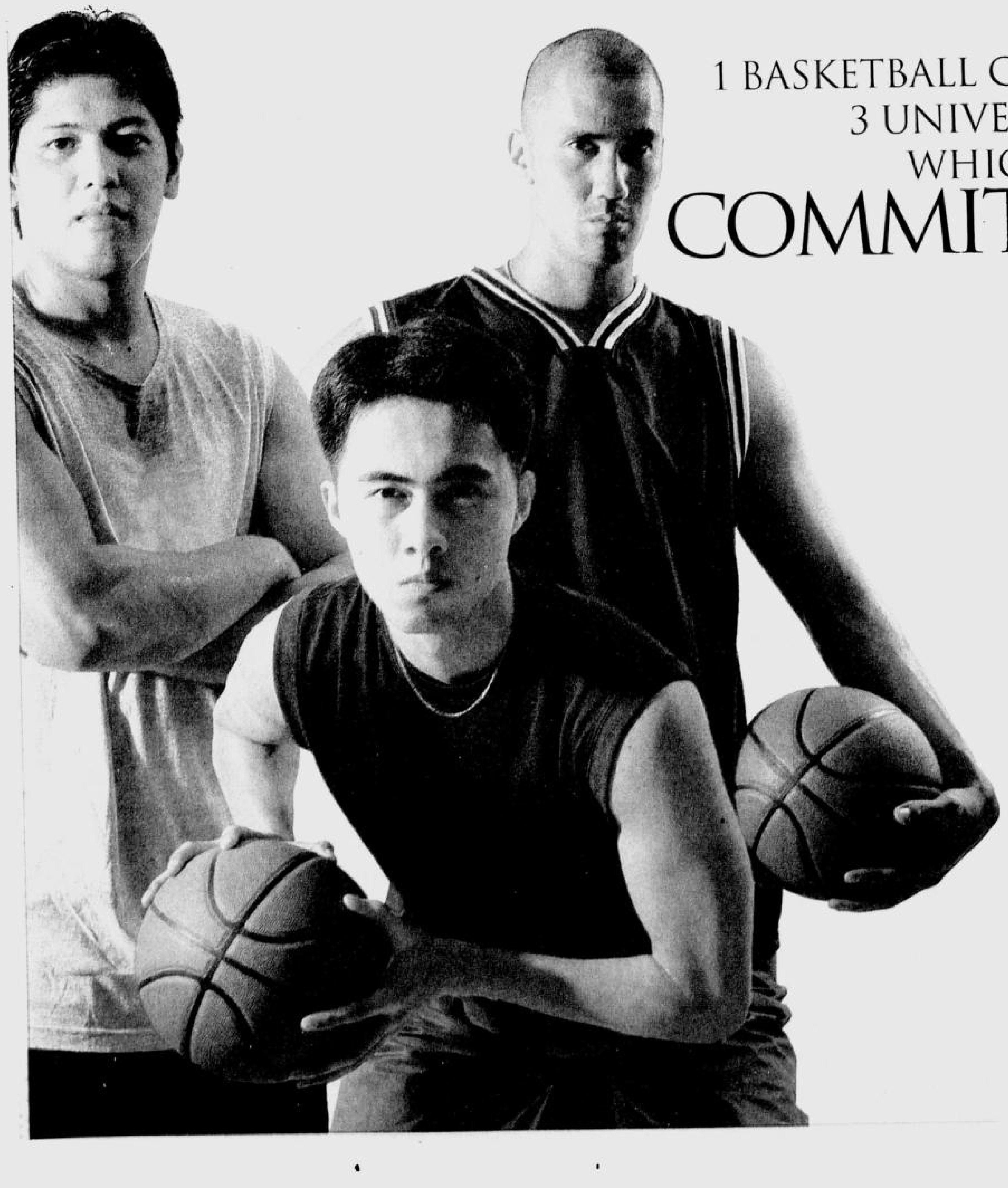

1 BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP.
3 UNIVERSITY DEGREES.
WHICH TOOK MORE
COMMITMENT?

Rich Alvarez, Larry Fonacier,
Enrico Villanueva
Filipinos. University Graduates.
Basketball Players
Members, Ateneo 2002
UAAP Championship team

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ALI to sell non-core assets

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY firm Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) is looking at divesting more non-core property assets after it recently sold its 15.8-percent beneficial interest in Metro Rail Transit-3 , officially known as the Light Rail Transit-3 project, to investment bank Goldman Sachs (Asia) Finance for $65 million.

Sources said ALI was looking at disposing pieces of land in various locations and certain investment in shares of stock. They declined to disclose further details.

ALI last year identified other non-core assets in its portfolio, which included some developed and raw lands and its more than 15-percent stake in a company involved in the LRT project.

For the past two years, ALI had sold certain lots that were sites for gas stations and an 80-hectare property in Boracay that was earmarked for resort development.

ALI also sold last year its entire 28-percent interest in Pilipinas Makro to companies affiliated with SM Investments Corp. and Orkam Holding Asia N.V., a local holding subsidiary of Makro's mother firm SHV Makro.

ALI senior vice president and chief finance officer Jaime Ysmael said Monday in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that ALI completed the sale to Goldman of preferred redeemable shares in Astoria Investment Ventures Inc. (AIVI), ALI's wholly-owned unit that holds a 15.8-percent stake in the MRT-3 project that runs from North Edsa to Taft.

He explained in a separate interview that the sale only meant that ALI was foregoing its share in rental revenue from the LRT project and that it would remain a shareholder of AIVI since it owns 15.8 percent of the project, equivalent to two board seats.

The net proceeds raised, roughly P3.2 billion, will be used to fund project requirements, working capital and pare down some of the property firm's debt.

ALI has also retained its equity interest in North Triangle Depot Commercial Corp. (NTDCC), the owner of a shopping center to be located in the depot of the MRT-3 project. ALI recently increased its stake in NTDCC to 49 percent last year.

ALI's net income grew 11 percent to P3 billion in 2004. Revenue was up 24 percent to P18 billion led by buoyant sales across nearly all product lines. Rental revenue, particularly from retail operations, grew 10 percent to P3.9 billion, accounting for 22 percent of total. Expansion of shopping centers, high occupancies and strong merchant sales fueled leasing revenues. Total leasable area increased with the opening of Greenbelt 4, the completion of SM Makati renovation and the operation of Market! Market!. Ayala Center continued to benefit from the higher pedestrian traffic as well as sustained marketing and advertising efforts.

Banco de Oro 2004 profit up 33% to ₱2B

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank of mall magnate Henry Sy earned P2 billion in 2004, 33 percent higher than year-ago's P1.51 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), BDO said its net interest income improved by 38 percent to P5.02 billion from P3.65 billion in 2003 due to an expansion in the bank's balance sheet.

Non-interest income, however, declined by 4 percent to P2.6 billion, as trading gains slowed to P1.05 billion.

The decline was offset by improvements in foreign exchange gains as well as in fees derived from trust, branch deposits, cash management and insurance.

Operating expenses were placed at P4.89 billion, which were 27 percent higher than year-ago level.

The increase in operating expenses was primarily due to higher manpower and occupancy costs.

BDO said its non-performing loans settled at P4.34 billion, down from P4.87 billion in the previous year. Despite the reduction in NPL levels, the bank set aside provisions worth P676 million during the year, placing its NPL coverage ratio at 83 percent to total loans. Its NPL ratio of 5.87 percent was one of the the lowest in the local banking industry.

Resources stood at P179.15 billion, an increase of 20 percent from the previous year. Deposits also grew by 24 percent to P128.1 billion while net loans spiked 7 percent to P60 billion. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

AUB nets ₱457M

ASIA United Bank posted a net income of P457 million in 2004, slightly lower than the 2003 level of P477 million.

The bank said its net interest income rose by P267 million or 28 percent year on year, but income from other sources, including securities trading, declined.

As of Dec. 31, AUB assets stood at P18.5 billion, representing a 5-percent growth from year-ago. Total loans improved by 8 percent to P11.8 billion and total deposits grew by 6 percent to P9.8 billion. The bank's net worth likewise improved by 13 percent to P4.1 billion from P3.6 billion.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo leads the ceremonial ringing of bell, meant to bid good luck, during the inauguration of UPS' expanded intra-Asia hub in Clark, Pampanga. Looking on is UPS International president David Abney. EDWIN BACASMAS

UPS expanding Clark operations

By Clarissa S. Batino

UNITED Parcel Service, one of the world's largest logistics companies, is expanding its intra-Asia hub at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.

The company expanded its container facility in the area and added two cargo flights nightly in keeping with the increased volume of cargos for distribution.

Gillian Sim, managing director of UPS International Express Ltd. Inc., said the company had just started flying from Clark to Osaka and would launch its cargo flights to Xiamen by the end of the month. These brought to 10 UPS' destinations in the region.

UPS delivers packages from its Clark facility to China, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong and some European countries.

The local hub allows UPS to compete more aggressively in Asia and improve its Asia-Europe service.

Sim said the container facility in Clark now covers about 6,000 square meters of land, up from 2,300 square meters. The company spent about $1.4 million to expand the facility.

In 2002, UPS invested $300 million to build its intra-Asia hub in Clark.

Victor Jose Luciano, executive vice president of Clark Development Corp., said the logistics firm had committed to expand its local hub further in the future. During the launch of the company's expansion program, President Macapagal-Arroyo assured UPS that her administration was aggressively developing Clark, together with Subic, to make it "the best logistics and service hub in Asia."

Ealier, Sim said he was looking forward to the installation of a radar at the airport, which presently relies on a similar facility at the Naia. *With a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

BPI unit reports ₱36.4-M income

AYALA Plans Inc., the pre-need subsidiary of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), posted income before extraordinary items of P36.4 million for 2004.

"Despite the recent events and negative publicity in media regarding the pre-need industry, we are doing well, thanks to our base of loyal plan holders," said Ayala Plans president Emilio S. De Quiros Jr.

De Quiros said the company's financial performance had allowed it to fully amortize deferred commissions, complying one year ahead of the other pre-need companies. Section 16 of the Securities Regulation Code Rule 31 of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) compels all pre-need companies to fully amortize all deferred commissions by the end of year 2005.

"The investment portfolio of Ayala Plans is highly liquid," added De Quiros. "Our trust fund is invested in fixed income funds that can be withdrawn anytime to ensure liquidity at the time that plan holders wish or need to avail themselves of their benefits.

First Metro declares special cash dividend

By Doris C. Dumlao

FIRST Metro Investment Corp., a unit of banking leader Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co., declared a special cash dividend of P1.5 billion after posting a net profit of P1 billion in 2004.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FMIC senior vice president and corporate information officer Danilo Olondriz said revenue amounted to P1.79 billion while income before income tax was recorded at P1.27 billion.

"Our strategic business units continued to perform strongly despite the labored landscape of 2004," said FMIC president Francisco Sebastian.

"This allowed us to end the year with a P1.003 billion in net income, or a return on equity of 14 percent," he added.

FMIC's board of directors also approved a cash dividend to all existing stockholders at the rate of P40 per share, equivalent to P1.51 billion.

The dividend is subject to the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The FMIC president is authorized to fix or set the record and payment dates after receipt of the approval of the BSP of the cash dividend.

FMIC recently adopted a dividend policy of at least 2 percent per quarter, subject to the availability of retained earnings

FIRST/B7

Shares

From page B1

now," said DA Market Securities president Nestor Aguila. "At the end of the day, there's still value in Philippine stocks, in terms of price/earnings ratio and corporate earnings."

While some traders said concerns over a possible monetary policy tightening also weighed on the market, Aguila said even if the central bank decides to increase its key overnight rates, stocks were likely to weather such the move because they would continue to provide higher returns than fixed-income instruments. *AP*

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CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,150,000/1,300,000*	
Alta Vista A/B*	250,000	180,000/220,000*
Baguio Country Club	Pls Call	
Calatagan Golf	50,000	
Camp John Hay	150,000	
Canyon Woods	140,000	
Capital Hills	110,000	
Cebu Country Club	Pls Call	Pls Call
Celebrity Sports	160,000	100,000
City Sports Club Cebu	Pls Call	
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	210,000/280,000*/Pls Call**	
Eastridge A/B*	130,000*	85,000*
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	130,000/150,000*/250,000**	110,000/160,000*
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls Call	
Manila Polo	Pls Call	2,070,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	Pls Call*	370,000/670,000*
Makati Sports Club	210,000	170,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	150,000/200,000*	110,000
Mimosa C2/C3*	320,000	250,000*
Mimosa Golf Ind.	160,000	
Mt. Malarayat A/B*	190,000	160,000/350,000*
Orchard A/B*/C**	250,000*	150,000
Puerto Azul	80,000	
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	120,000	180,000**
Rockwell Leisure Club	380,000	230,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	80,000	
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/110,000*/180,000**	
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	1,200,000/1,400,000*	Pls Call
The Palms Country Club	650,000	470,000
Tagaytay Country Club	Pls Call	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands	800,000	
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	690,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	
Valle Verde Ind.	130,000	
Valley Golf	280,000	
Wack Wack Golf	Pls Call	Pls Call

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CURRENCIES

April 5, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.778028	1.000000	54.8160
Japan	Yen	0.007187	0.009238	0.5064
United Kingdom	Pound	1.459348	1.875700	102.8184
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099750	0.128220	7.0285
Switzerland	Franc	0.643424	0.826993	45.3324
Canada	Dollar	0.636893	0.818599	44.8723
Singapore	Dollar	0.467116	0.600384	32.9106
Australia	Dollar	0.596511	0.766695	42.0272
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.063791	2.652590	145.4044
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207475	0.266667	14.6176
Brunei	Dollar	0.465718	0.598587	32.8121
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000105	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019702	0.025323	1.3881
UAE	Dirham	0.211841	0.272279	14.9252
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.285300	70.4550
Argentina	Peso	0.266676	0.342759	18.7887
Brazil	Real	0.292988	0.376577	20.6424
Denmark	Kroner	0.134243	0.172542	9.4581
India	Rupee	0.017792	0.022868	1.2535
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204772	0.263193	14.4272
Mexico	New Peso	0.069436	0.089246	4.8921
New Zealand	Dollar	0.540455	0.706215	38.7119
Norway	Kroner	0.122048	0.156868	8.5989
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013105	0.016844	0.9233
South Africa	Rand	0.125025	0.160694	8.8086
Korea	Won	0.000768	0.000987	0.0541
Sweden	Kroner	0.108945	0.140027	7.6757
Syria	Pound	0.014988	0.019264	1.0560
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024667	0.031705	1.7379
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000363	0.000466	0.0255

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 5, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	621,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52	52	50.5	51.5	1,600,700
China Banking Corp.	860	865	860	860	420
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.82	0.84	0.78	0.78	9,860,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46.5	47	45.5	47	51,000
International Exch. Bank	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	71,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	34	34.5	33.5	34	393,000
Philippine National Bank	32.5	33	32	32.5	151,500
Union Bank of the Phil.	30	30	29	30	172,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2480	2480	2480	2480	830
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	307,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	2,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1740	1740	1735	1740	290
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.75	14,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.22	1.28	1.22	1.24	24,159,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	880	895	880	880	5,200
Ipeople Inc.	4.5	4.55	4.5	4.5	68,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.049	800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.04	2.2	2.04	2.2	94,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.4	2,626,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1410	1410	1395	1395	31,850
Ivantage Corp.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.73	2,290,000
Philweb Corp.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	56,000,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.5	18.5	18	18.25	13,300
Manila Electric Co. B	26.5	27	25.5	25.5	250,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	7,350,000
Petron Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.65	1,813,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	50,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.82	1.84	1.82	1.84	1,089,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.4	7.4	7	7	804,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	3,550,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.65	506,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	30,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	25,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	35	35	35	35	10,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29.5	29.5	28	28.5	299,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.14	55,000
RFM Corp.	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.96	20,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.33	200,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	57	56	57	123,300
San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	82	81	82	40,300
Universal Robina Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.5	323,700
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	5,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	2,745,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.7	4.7	4.65	4.7	206,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.047	3,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.14	2.14	2,178,000
APC Group Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	520,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	1,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.46	110,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	14,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	10,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	15	15	15	15	3,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	280,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.02	1.02	17,472,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	520,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	800,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	250,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.45	3.45	3.3	3.3	596,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	1,400,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.6	9.7	9.4	9.4	302,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	54	54	50.5	51	738,800
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	70,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0925	0.0975	0.0925	0.095	5,500,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.62	1.62	387,000
IPVG Corp.	3	3	3	3	4,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	429,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.36	1.36	2,337,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	150,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.48	0.49	0.45	0.46	17,120,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.96	1	0.96	1	60,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	100,000
SM Investments Corp.	239	240	235	237	747,870
South China Resources Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.68	920,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.165	0.17	6,870,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.81	0.89	0.8	0.89	560,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.125	2,020,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.32	1.32	6,691,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1	1	0.98	0.98	690,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.42	1.44	3,977,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	910,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15.75	15.75	15	15.25	238,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	700
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.6	4,871,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.31	0.31	190,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1	1	0.99	0.99	350,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,190,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.27	1,740,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.27	0.3	0.27	0.3	860,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	8,520,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.44	1.44	5,052,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	300,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	5	5.1	4.9	4.9	351,000
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	580,000
SM Development Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.74	1.8	17,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	7.9	8	1,431,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1	1	0.96	0.96	70,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1	1	120,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	75,000
Benguet Corp. B	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	500
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.37	3,920,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.39	0.4	0.38	0.38	1,830,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.016	56,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.023	0.021	0.022	91,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.0075	764,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.14	1,870,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.44	1.44	1.38	1.38	1,614,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	37	37	36.5	36.5	123,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	220,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.012	0.01	0.012	2,600,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	21,000,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	10,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.19	0.19	17,970,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.34	300,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	13,231,340	136,521,870.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	191,240,720	491,136,775.00
PRO	27,552,000	69,442,660.00
Mining	923,343,300	20,337,950.00
OIL	52,380,000	3,795,500.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,207,747,360	721,234,755.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	577.43	UP 2.12
Comm'l & Ind'l	3,073.87	DOWN 53.19
PRO	768.00	DOWN 17.19
Mining	3,127.23	DOWN 89.44
OIL	2.54	DOWN 0.02
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,179.71	DOWN 21.81
Composite	1,982.70	DOWN 31.66

NO. OF ADVANCES: 15; NO. OF DECLINES: 77; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 39; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 131; NO. OF TRADES: 3,118

DISCLOSURES

GLOBE Telecom approved the election of Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II as board chair and the decrease in its authorized capital from P11.2 to P10.2 billion.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank declared a cash dividend of P0.60 centavos to stockholders of record as of April 19. The dividend is payable on May 2.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Trust Co. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 26, 4 p.m. at Philtrust Building, United Nations Ave. corner San Marcelino Street, Manila.

* * *

SM Development Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 26, 4 p.m. at Manila AB Room, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City.

* * *

ALASKA Milk Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 10, 9 a.m. at Mandarin Oriental Manila, Makati Avenue, Makati City.

* * *

CEBU Property Ventures and Development Corp. denied having any information that could explain the 50-percent increase in its share price from P0.30 to P0.45 each.

* * *

CITYLAND Development Corp. declared a cash dividend of P0.1736 per share to all stockholders of record as of April 19.

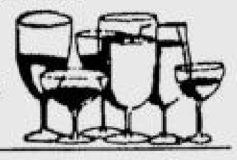
* * *

SEMIRARA Mining Corp. rescheduled its annual stockholders' meeting from May 2 to May 27, 10 a.m . The board also approved the resignation of Eduardo V. Mañalac as director and Alfonso Ruiz II as corporate secretary. They will be replaced by Arthur N. Aguilar and John Sadullo, respectively.

Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research

Money-go-round

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

• LBC owner Carlos Araneta is being asked to appear in a Delaware court for deposition proceedings on Monday to answer a complaint of corporate waste and breach of fiduciary duty filed by ATR Kim Eng, which holds a 10-percent stake in LBC Global.

Also being asked to appear along with Araneta are LBC Global officers Hugo Bonilla, Liza Berenguer and Marites Vicente.

LBC Global, the holding company of the LBC Group, is listed in Delaware.

• THE Yuletide P1,000 assessment for all members of the Alabang Country Club has become the election issue in this Friday's annual shareholders' meeting. The P1,000 levy went to the Christmas gratuity fund of the club employees, but, as usual in any club, a *contrapelo* group questioned its "mandatory gratuity" description.

• RESTAURATEUR Carmelo Santiago's son-in-law Richard Rivera has been arrested again by the police, this time, over another case in Mandaluyong.

Heard through the grapevine

NESTLÉ Philippine manager Salvador Pigem has passed away in his Barcelona home, and will be replaced by Nandu Nandkishore, the country manager in Indone sia.

(Due to connection problems, Cocktales was unable to transmit the first part of today's column. Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

StanChart optimistic . . .

From page B1

Since President Macapagal-Arroyo won a fresh six-year mandate in office, Henderson said the reform effort had remained at the top of her agenda. He added that strong economic growth was making fiscal reforms less painful now that elections were out of the way.

He said two important reforms on the fiscal front early this year had helped to dispel fears that the political appetite for reform was lacking.

The bank expects more such reforms to follow, including the value-added tax bill, considered as the centrepiece of Arroyo's measures, Henderson said.

"As a result, the worst may be over for the credit ratings of the Philippines," Henderson said.

"Indeed, for the first time since the Asian crisis, the next move for Philippine ratings may be higher rather than lower. This is a positive spill over from the progress made on fiscal reforms," he said.

The bank's forex strategist said the country's economic gains—particularly the higher-than-expected growth in 2004 which was driven by a recovery in exports and robust consumption as boosted by overseas remittances—were modestly supporting the peso for now.

But he noted that the absence of monetary tightening weighed on the peso to some degree in the second half of 2004 and added to inflation expectations.

The country's gross domestic product growth, he said, should remain strong in 2005, although some moderation was likely given a slowdown in external demand.

Henderson added that the strong capital inflows to the country would be further supported by the government's privatization plans, including the sale of the combined 41-percent stake in food and beverage giant San Miguel Corp.

Doris C. Dumlao

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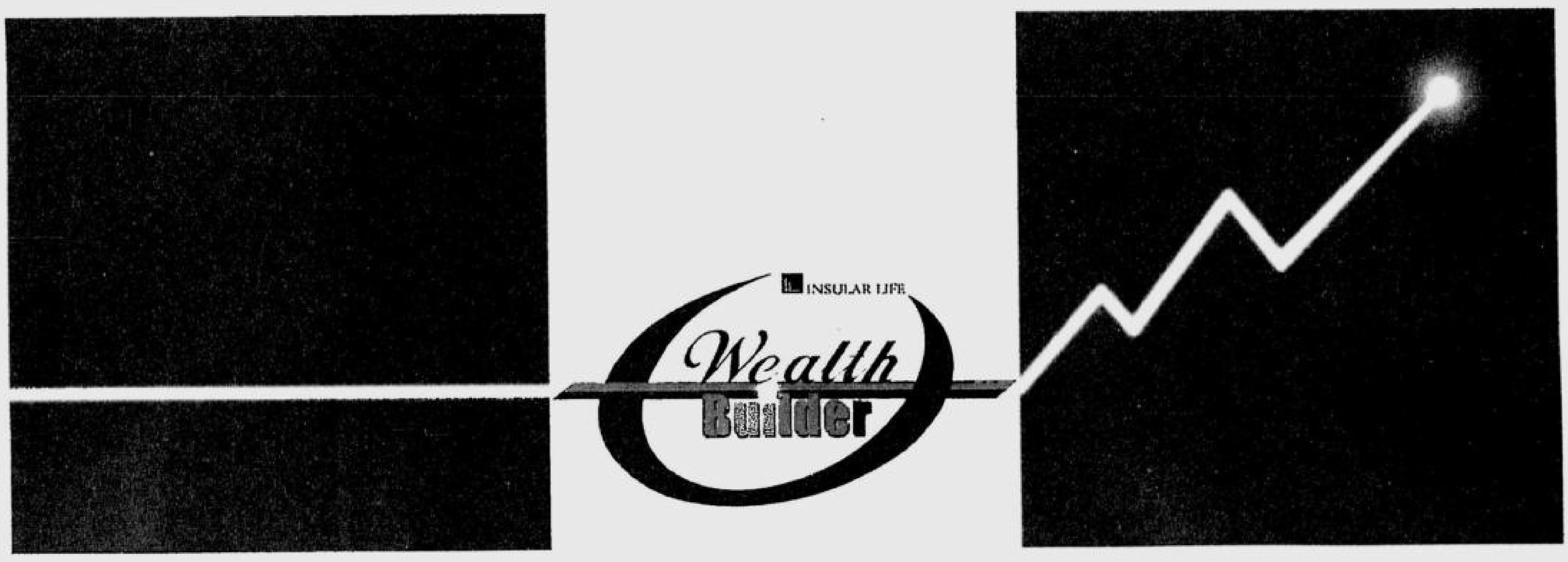

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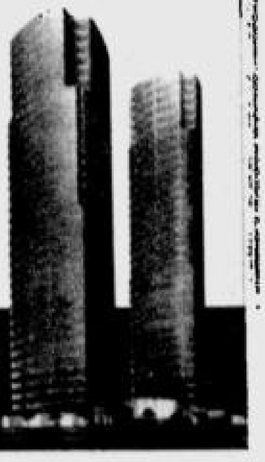

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC MMSD 2005-008

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) - Materials Management Services Division (MMSD), Materials Management Department (MMD) of National Power Corporation invites all parties interested to apply for eligibility and to bid for the service Contracts listed below.

PROJECT NO. LOGMMSD200503-019: SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS/EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES/MATERIALS AND SUPERVISION FOR THE MANPOWER REQUIREMENT OF NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION OFFICES, PLANTS AND OTHER INSTALLATIONS RELATED TO JANITORIAL MAINTENANCE, LAWN AND GARDEN/ LANDSCAPING AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES.

SCHEDULE	FG	OFFICE/ INSTALLATION	LOCATION	NO. OF MAN POWER	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC) FOR TWO (2) YEARS
I	TMS	BNPP Preservation Project	Morong,Bataan	65	18,421,351.68
II	TMS	Sucat Thermal Power Plant	Sucat, Muntinlupa City	45	13,439,394.00
III	SPUG	Basco Diesel PP	Basco, Batanes	1	798,435.84
		Sabtang Diesel PP	Sabtang, Batanes	1	918,283.20
		Ilbayat Diesel PP	Ilbayat, Batanes	1	918,283.20
		Calayan Diesel PP	Calayan, Cagayan	1	438,450.00
		Kabugao Diesel PP	Kabugao, Apayao	1	454,727.76
		Lubuagan Diesel PP	Lubuagan, Kalinga	1	336,123.84
		Palanan (Isabela) Diesel PP	Palanan, Isabela	1	403,929.60
		Casiguran (Aurora) Diesel PP	Casiguran, Aurora	1	574,111.20
		Polillo Diesel PP	Polillo, Quezon	1	636,534.00
		Jomalig Diesel PP	Jomalig, Quezon	1	377,536.80
		Patnanungan Diesel PP	Patnanungan, Quezon	1	441,743.28
	TMS	San Roque Multi-Purpose PP	Sn Manuel,Pangasinan	9	2,600,573.04
		Flood Forecasting/FFWSDO	Sn Manuel,Pangasinan	2	664,028.64
	S&S	Baguio Satellite Office	Baguio City	2	911,596.80
			Total	24	10,474,357.20
IV	LOG	Ligao Warehouse & Stockyard	Ligao, Albay	5	1,021,329.36
	TMS	Tiwi-Makban Rehab Proj.	Tiwi, Albay	1	166,745.52
	SPUG	OM CAM Opertns. Divisions	Daraga, Albay	1	721,351.92
		Batan Diesel PP	Batan, Albay	1	644,458.08
		Rapu-rapu Diesel PP	Rapu-rapu Island, Albay	1	934,265.04
		Marinawa Diesel PP	Bato, Catanduanes	2	801,457.92
		Balongbong HEPP	Bato, Catanduanes	3	968,203.44
		Viga Diesel PP	Viga, Catanduanes	1	767,293.20
		Power Barge 110	Viga, Catanduanes	1	675,581.28
		Masbate Diesel PP	Mobo, Masbate	1	247,614.24
		Ticao Diesel PP	Ticao, Masbate	1	449,076.48
		Power Barge 105	Masbate Pier, Masbate	2	515,450.40
		Torrijos Diesel PP	Torrijos, Marinduque	1	365,326.80
		Boac Diesel PP	Boac, Marinduque	2	1,198,591.20
		Power Barge 120	Mogpog, Marinduque	3	1,297,156.32
		OM-Mindoro/Romblon Area	Calapan, Mindoro Or.	3	950,971.92
		Mamburao Diesel PP	Mamburao, Mindoro Occ.	1	546,386.88
		Pulang Lupa DPP	San Jose, Mindoro Occ.	1	559,556.64
		Lubang Diesel PP	Lubang, Mindoro Occ.	1	247,937.04
		Sibuyan Diesel PP	Sibuyan, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Concepcion Diesel PP	Concepcion, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Banton Diesel PP	Banton, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Corcuera Diesel PP	Corcuera, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		San Jose Diesel PP	San Jose, Romblon	1	466,817.76
		Romblon Diesel PP	Romblon, Romblon	1	247,937.04
		Power Barge 114	Romblon Pier, Rombl.	1	348,705.12
		Tablas Diesel PP	Tablas, Romblon	1	247,937.04
		Power Barge 109	Tablas Island, Romblon	1	348,705.12
			Total	41	16,606,126.80
V	TMS	Palawan Backbone Project	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	975,289.44
	SPUG	OM-Palawan Area	Pto Prin., Palawan	1	613,480.08
		El Nido Diesel PP	El Nido, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		SPUG	San Vicente, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Cuyo Diesel PP	Cuyo, Palawan	1	545,076.24
		Busuanga Diesel PP	Coron, Busuanga,Pal.	1	545,076.24
		Culion Diesel PP	Culion, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Linapacan Diesel PP	Linapacan, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Araceli Diesel PP	Araceli, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Balabac Diesel PP	Balabac, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Agutaya Diesel PP	Agutaya, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Cagayancillo Diesel PP	Cagayancillo, Palawan	1	545,076.24
		Puerto Princesa DPP	Pto. Prin., Palawan	1	947,435.04
		Power Barge 106	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	707,394.72
		Roxas Diesel PP	Roxas, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Taytay Diesel PP	Taytay, Palawan	1	934,265.04
		Brooke's Pt. Substation	Brks. Pt., Palawan	1	602,070.00
		Narra Substation	Narra, Palawan	2	697,650.72
		Irawan Substation	Pto. Prin., Palawan	2	795,155.52
			Total	23	15,382,089.60
VI	SPUG	OM SPUG Visayas	Cebu City	4	1,101,337.68
		MTSD Visayas	Cebu City	1	190,051.44
		Naga Mooring Facility	Naga, Cebu	2	604,450.80
		Biri Diesel PP	Biri, Samar	1	327,160.08
		Camotes Diesel PP	Camotes, Cebu	2	445,120.32
		Bantayan Diesel PP	Bantayan, Cebu	2	704,946.48
		Power Barge 116	Madridejos, Cebu	1	405,877.92
		Siquijor Diesel PP	Candaney, Siquijor	2	890,004.72
		Power Barge 113	Lazi, Siquijor	1	574,626.96
	TMS	APD: Cebu Diesel PP	Toledo City, Cebu	17	3,842,201.28
		PMD: Dingle DPP-II	Dingle, Ilo-Ilo	2	843,152.24
	IPP	Visayas Office	Cebu City	1	560,658.00
	S&S	Satellite Office	Cebu City	1	254,524.80
			Total	37	10,553,112.72
			Grand Total	*235*	*84,876,432.00*

1. Application for eligibility and to bid is open to all janitorial and manpower agencies who are:
   - a. Actively registered with the Securities and Exchange Committee (SEC) and or Department of Trade and Industry (DTI),
   - b. Duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), in case of Cooperatives;
   - c. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships,
   - d. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines,
   - e. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
   - f. Entities forming themselves into a joint venture that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract *Provided, however*, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%),
   - g. Has been operating for at least two (2) years preceding the submission of application for eligibility,
   - h. Shall not have any relationship to the Head of the procuring entity up to the third (3rd) civil degree by consanguinity or affinity.
   - i. Have no record of unsatisfactory performance or disqualification to participate public bidding with NPC or in any kind of contract with Philippine Government.
   - j. Must be able to finance at least one (1) month salary of their personnel in case there is delay in collection
   - k. Shall not have three (3) or more outstanding or existing janitorial and skilled manpower service contracts with NPC. However, should the contractor has three (3) or more existing/outstanding contracts with NPC, he may apply if the third (3rd) or other succeeding contracts has less than six (6) months remaining period of duration Or the prospective bidder can apply if the is the existing contractor of the contract to be bid even if the has three (3) or more existing contracts with NPC.
   - l. Shall not have an outstanding adverse and unresolved complaint vis-à-vis NPC, constituting loss of trust and confidence between NPC and the prospective bidder.
   - m. Shall not have pending administrative case for the violation of SSS and minimum wage laws.
2. The value of the prospective bidders largest single contract similar to the contract to be bid must be at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid (ABC)
3. The prospective bidder must present a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC to be bid, or must have a Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) which must be at least equal to the ABC to be bid.
4. Contract duration is for two (2) years unless sooner terminated. Source of funding is thru Internal Cash Generation. Only bids within the Approved Budget for Contract to be bid shall be accepted

Eligibility and bid documents will be available for issuance from **March 28 to April 21, 2005, 8:30 to 11:30 AM** at Materials Management Services Division (MMSD) - Materials Management Department (MMD) Bldg. 1, National Power Corporation, cor. BIR Rd. Diliman Quezon City, upon submission of:

1. SEC/DTI/CDA registration
2. Payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand pesos Only (P 1,000.00) per schedule

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for eligibility and bid documents, forms and statements shall be on May 5, 2005, 10:00 A.M. at Kaôao Function Room. If the date is declared a non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted. **A pre bid conference shall be conducted on April 21, 2005, 2:00 P.M. at Kaôao Function Room.**

Single Stage Bidding with post qualification, under R.A. 9184 shall be applied for this project.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following a) liability to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - March 28 & April 6, 2005)

Asian nations take steps to cut oil consumption

PARIS—The constant surge in oil prices has prompted some consumer nations, particularly in Asia, to take steps to reduce oil consumption and ease the burden on public finances.

The price of crude oil hit fresh highs Monday, topping $57 a barrel for Brent in London and climbing to $58.28 in New York, as investors worried about the red-hot demand and the risk of a gasoline shortage in the "summer driving season" in the northern hemisphere.

Oil prices already have soared 38 percent in New York and 47 percent in London since January.

Some countries have begun to react by reducing government subsidies, such as those for fuel.

That is particularly the case in Asia, expected to account for 40 percent of this year's increase in oil demand thanks to China's booming economy.

Indonesia in early March raised official prices for all hydrocarbons except for heating oil; Thailand raised diesel prices 20 percent in mid-March; China and Vietnam have taken similar measures; and Malaysia is considering following suit, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA), which advises the rich OECD countries on energy security.

Outside Asia, Nigeria decided in late 2003 to deregulate fuel prices and eliminate subsidies but has regularly paid the price in social unrest.

REUTERS

A TRIO of traders in the crude oil pit of the New York Mercantile Exchange make trades on a day that oil reached record high prices. Oil prices scaled fresh highs, forcing Opec to consider a second output increase just a day after its deal to raise supplies failed to halt crude's record-breaking advance.

By contrast, Iran, one of the leading oil producers, still heavily subsidizes fuel prices, which are extremely low compared with the global average.

Subsidizing energy prices is a common practice of oil-producing and developing countries, where governments want to stimulate economic growth and improve the standard of living.

But subsidies poses difficult problems during periods of high oil prices, costing the government dearly and protecting consumers so much they have no reason to reduce their consumption, said IEA analyst Lawrence Eagles.

A drop in subsidies, even if its immediate impact remains difficult to assess; is "a start", he said. *AFP*

Ministers to focus on cooperation

ISLAMABAD—Ministers from 26 Asian countries will meet in the Pakistani capital this week to promote economic links and hammer out regional disputes.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz will today open the fourth ministerial conference of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue, or ACD, while a pre-conference seminar kicked off yesterday.

Premier Wen Jiabao of China, which hosted last year's meeting, will be the keynote speaker.

Foreign ministers of 17 countries will attend the main conference and other members will be represented at other senior levels, a Pakistani foreign ministry official said.

At a pre-conference seminar on Tuesday experts from member countries are to analyze the challenges facing the region and come up with recommendations for the conference.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said this week the conference aimed to establish interlocking political and economic relations with the countries of Central, East and North East Asia.

Kasuri said the forum provided a valuable chance to forge closer economic linkages, not only with the economically powerful Association of South East Asian Nations but beyond.

The Asian Cooperation Dialogue groups Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Iran, Mongolia, United Arab Emirates and Bhutan. *AFP*

Dollar gains, boosting some Asian markets

SINGAPORE—Crude oil prices slipped back from all-time highs and the dollar hit a fresh five-month high against the yen on Tuesday, prompting Asian investors to buy exporters' shares.

European shares were expected to open higher, aided by a firm Wall Street showing. Financial bookmakers forecast the FTSE 100, France's CAC-40 and Germany's DAX indices would start between 12 and 22 points higher.

Tokyo's Nikkei average rose 0.92 percent to 11,774.31, helped by gains in dollar-earning companies such as auto maker Honda Motor Co. and office equipment maker Canon Inc., which rose 2.2 and 1.4 percent respectively.

"An earnings reporting season is approaching both in Japan and in the US so investors are looking in particular for firms with possible upward revisions. They are being lured by an anticipated recovery in the high-tech sector, likely to be a swift one, given a recent decline in inventories," said Norihiro Fujito, senior investment strategist at Mitsubishi Securities.

However, MSCI's non-Japan index of Asian markets edged lower by around 2 p.m., despite mild gains on Singapore's Straits Times Index and Australia's S&P ASX 200.

Other key Asian markets in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea were closed for national holidays.

The fall in oil prices helped US stocks gain on Monday.

The Dow Jones industrial average gained 0.16 percent to 10,421.14. The Nasdaq Composite Index rose 0.32 percent.

US crude futures slipped as funds took profits, but strong US oil demand was expected to push prices higher again.

NYMEX crude oil lost 39 cents or 0.68 percent to trade at $56.62 a barrel. On Monday it hit a high of $58.28.

"Technical sales can pull prices down by two, three dollars (from the highs) easily," said Tony Nunan, manager at Mitsubishi Corp.'s international petroleum business.

"But the overall trend is up because (US) oil demand looks very strong despite high prices."

The dollar extended a two-week rally on expectations US interest rates will keep rising and rates of rival currencies won't change soon.

Traders were turning attention to a speech by Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan on energy for clues on the Fed's view of the US economy amid soaring oil prices.

"The dollar's trend is clearly bullish as it's no longer reacting to negative news," said Yoshiharu Yanagisawa, head of forex trading at State Street in Tokyo.

The dollar bought around 108.64 yen, up from 108.30 yen in late US trade on Monday.

The euro was slightly down at $1.2821, just above a seven-week trough of $1.2818 marked the previous day.

Spot gold started Asian trading around $423.25 an ounce, little changed from late business in New York. *Reuters*

ChevronTexaco to buy Unocal

NEW YORK—ChevronTexaco Corp. won a close race to scoop up smaller California rival Unocal Corp. for about $16.4 billion on Monday, pocketing prized assets in Asia and expanding its reach in the Gulf of Mexico.

The deal—rumors of which had set shares of No. 9 US oil and gas producer Unocal ablaze since December—gives ChevronTexaco a production portfolio that stretches from the waters off Indonesia and Myanmar to Congo and Brazil.

Analysts hailed the deal as a good fit for the No. 5 global oil company's strategy to grow and a boost for its efforts to compete on the same playing field as much larger rivals like Exxon Mobil Corp. and BP Plc.

"This points to something very important—a strategic change from a focus on returns to a focus on long-term growth," said A.G. Edwards senior energy analyst Bruce Lanni. "Chevron needs to be in a competitive position with companies like Exxon, BP and Shell and the areas they were not the strongest were Asia-Pacific and the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico."

The deal, subject to regulatory and shareholder approval, came as oil prices surged to a fresh all-time high above $58 a barrel on Monday, after a steady ascent in recent months.

Surging prices have showered a cash windfall on oil companies, but declining exploration opportunities coupled with limited access to oil-rich regions such as the Middle East and Russia have left many searching for acquisitions to grow.

Of particular interest to Western majors is Asia, a region that has reshaped the energy landscape over the past year because of its burgeoning demand for oil—and one in which Unocal has the largest exposure to among its US peers.

"If you look at where all the assets are they are pretty close to hot markets," said Morgan Keegan analyst Subash Chandra. "It's just a substantial oil company that is up for sale and that is rare in this business."

Despite its enviable presence in the East, Unocal has historically underperformed peers and struggled with production declines. But booming oil prices helped it post record earnings in 2004, giving Wall Street a sense that its performance had finally turned a corner.

In the end, ChevronTexaco had to beat out Italian oil group Eni, China National Offshore Oil Corp. and other rumored suitors to acquire Unocal.

ChevronTexaco remains fifth among top oil majors even with a combined $140 billion market capitalization, behind Exxon—the largest with $390 billion in market cap—and followed by BP, Shell and France's Total.

Shares sink

The deal, structured as 75 percent stock and 25 percent cash, offers value of about $62 per share based on ChevronTexaco's April 1 closing share price. Unocal investors can opt for 1.03 shares of ChevronTexaco stock or $65 in cash for each share they hold.

ChevronTexaco will also assume about $1.6 billion in debt.

Shares of Unocal, which surged nearly 60 percent since December on expectations of a takeover, fell more than 7 percent on Monday -- based on a lack of premium in the deal from Friday's closing price.

"The stock has a 15 percent to 20 percent premium in it because it's been rumored to be for sale," said James Halloran, analyst with National City Private Client Group, which manages $33 billion in assets. *Reuters*

First Metro declares special cash dividend

From page B4

and approval by the BSP.

The capital funds of the company remained the largest in the industry at P5.7 billion.

Last month, the company declared a cash dividend of P299.76 million or P7.95 per share. Dividends declared by the company in 2005 now sum up to P47.95 per share, or a total of P1.81 billion.

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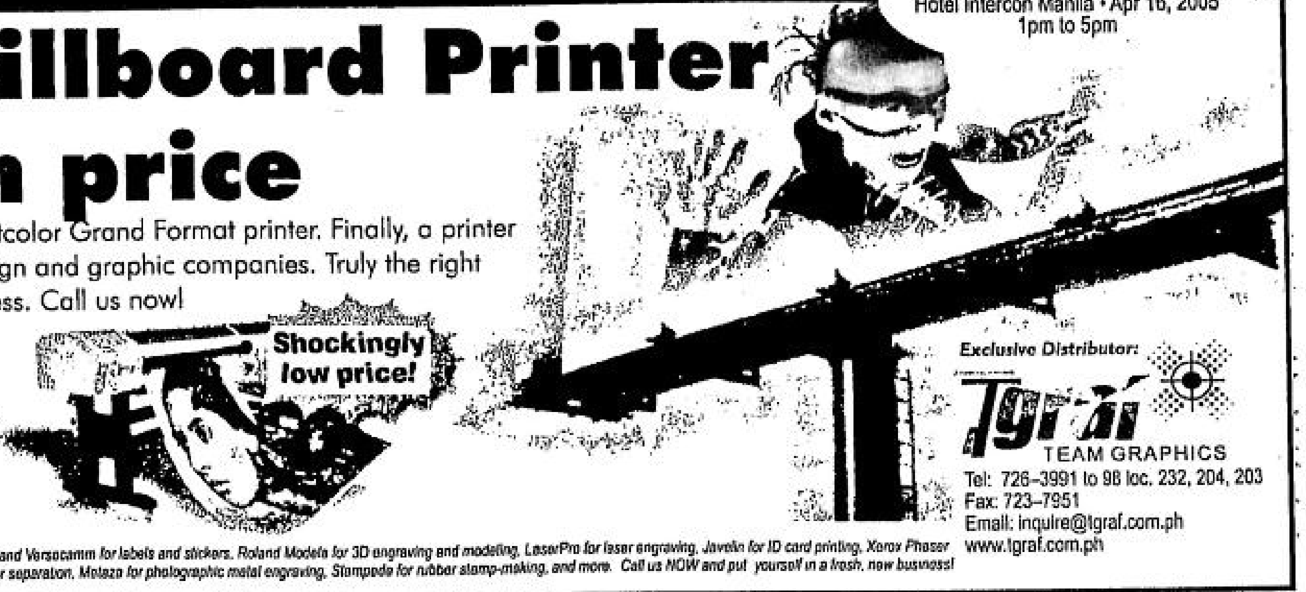
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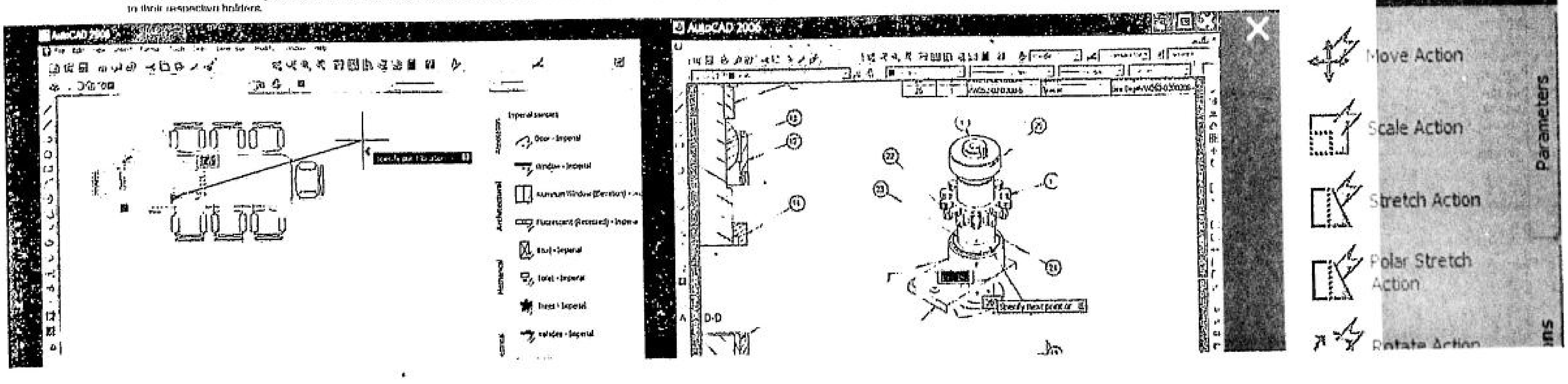

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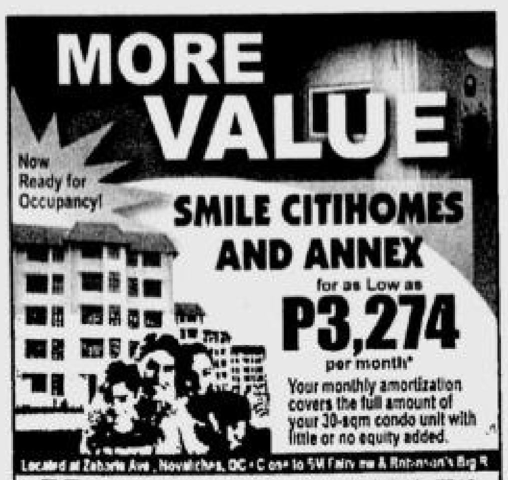

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late VICTORIA ESPIRITU REYES & the late EMILIANO E. REYES, SR. were settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial settlement of estate which was settled by their heirs through an extrajudicial settlement acknowledged before Not. Pub. Atlee T. Viray of City of San Fernando, Pampanga as per Doc. 375; Page 75, Bk. 85, Series of 2005. (PDI 3/23, 30 & 4/6, '05)

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of the late RICHARD CRUZ SARITO was extrajudicially settled among his heirs and entered in the Notarial Register of Notary Public Atty. Hernand T. Gutierrez under Doc. No. 354; Page No. 161; Book III; Series of 2005
PDI-March 23, 30 & April 6, 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is given that Celebrity Sports Plaza Stock Certificate No. 1897 with 30,000 shares of Dra. FE V. FERNANDEZ has been lost. If no contest is received new certificates will be issued.
(PDI- Apirl 6, 13 & 20, 2005)

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Philippine Daily Inquirer and Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) memorandum of agreement signing held at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City. From left Rolando B. Suarez, PDI HR and Admin Manager, Jesse Rebustillo, PDI Classified Ads Division Head, Lina A. Aseneta, PMAP President and Bernadette Cunanan, PMAP Director.
PDI PHOTO / RUDY ESPERAS

PEOPLE at WORK

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Reluctant supervisor needs leadership skills

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I GOT promoted to a supervisory position just a week ago. I am definitely thankful for this rare opportunity but I feel very pressured. Along with this promotion comes greater responsibility and expectations. I am not really concerned about ,the workload or responsibilities but rather with my lack of maturity and leadership training.

I guess I cannot imagine myself being a leader in a group that has been so used to my childlike attitude for the past three years. Although they have respect for my accomplishments, my problem is earning their confidence and respect as a supervisor. Furthermore, my lack of self-confidence has also affected the way I speak in front of them. As a result, I always get laughed at. I hope that you can give me some tips in how to improve on the aspects that I have mentioned above. Thank you very much.

Reluctant Supervisor

First of all, your predicament is not uncommon to first-time or newly appointed supervisors. You have been appointed to a higher responsibility, but the way your previous relationship with your teammates has been defined, is now posing a hindrance to your effectiveness in the new position. This, in fact, is a major reason why there are many "reluctant supervisors." These people have the intellect and capability to move up to leadership positions; however, they are bound by their past roles and relationships in the organization, which prevent them from moving forward.

Helping factors

The good news is there are "helping factors" that you can already build on from your current situation. One, you seem to be ready and willing to take on the additional responsibilities and workload of your new position. This is a positive attitude, which you need to demonstrate to your team in real terms, such as in the amount and quality of time and effort you commit to your job. Two, they have respect for your past accomplishments. This indicates that they are aware of your higher potentials in terms of accomplishing a job in a higher position, but may have some doubts about your ability to lead. This area of leadership you have to work on, and there's a lot of help you can get, through self-education, formal or informal training interventions. Three, it is my impression that your current subordinates are also your friends, and you are familiar with them to some degree. This may be a great opportunity to gain "allies" in your new role, depending on how you approach the situation. Leadership guru John Maxwell believes that "the stronger the relationship and connection between individuals, the more likely the follower will want to help the leader." So, it can be a matter of harnessing the friendships in the right manner.

Now, let's look at the hindering factors. Your immature ways and childlike attitude seem to give the perception that you are not cut out to be a leader. As a result, this has negatively affected your self-confidence, particularly when speaking to your subordinates. The fear of being laughed at or ridiculed could be devastating enough to discourage one from pursuing higher goals and initiatives.

Hindering factors

There are various ways to overcome these hindering factors, and moving forward with your new leadership position. You must first remember that the norms have changed for you and your team, and that your working friendships have to now be redefined, but not necessarily ended. Define and communicate these norms to them. Show them by your words and actions that you need their support. Your behavior is a key instrument that will earn you the respect and trust of your subordinates. You have to decide to act in a professional manner and put your "immature" ways behind. You are now in a position of influence and given the right approach, can exercise that influence to convert the relationship to one of support rather than rejection. Be sensitive in using your new authority, careful not to appear as if you now look down on your subordinates. Make changes gradually. Continue to stay in close contact with them and allow them to help you by delegating some tasks. You can maintain an open-door policy and even involve them in making some decisions. Agree on a team goal and rally everyone behind it.

Be patient with yourself, too. The situation may not change overnight, but you have to keep going—making sound decisions, admitting mistakes, and putting the team's and the organization's best interests ahead of your own. Managing tasks and people can be very challenging but also fulfilling. In time, you will earn your colleagues' respect and trust.

Finally, you can get help for developing your management and leadership skills through short practical courses. The Ancilla Business Training Center in Makati offers these courses to individuals and small groups. Good luck and God bless!

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.-com.ph or fax to 892-2902.)

April 9 is a regular holiday

THE DEPARTMENT of Labor and Employment (DOLE) today said April 9 (Saturday) is a regular holiday nationwide in commemoration of the Araw ng Kagitingan, which celebrates the Filipino valor, gallantry and heroism in Bataan, and Corregidor.

Pursuant to Labor and Employment Secretary Patricia A. Sto. Tomas' Memorandum Circular No. 01 issued to the country's private sector employers, the following regular holiday rules shall apply on April 9:

a) If the day is an employee's regular workday and the day is unworked, he or she should be paid 100 percent of his or her regular salary for that day.

b) If the day is worked, 200 percent shall apply on the first eight hours, and in excess of eight hours, 30 percent of the hourly rate on said day.

c) If the day falls on an employee's rest day and is unworked, 100 percent shall apply but if worked, plus 30 percent of 200 percent shall apply, and in excess of eight hours, plus 30 percent of the hourly rate on said day. (*Source:* www.dole.-gov.ph)

How can a placement firm help me get a job?

WORKING WOUNDED
Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I've been approached by a placement firm that wants to work with me. I've never thought to use such a service. What do I need to know to get someone searching on my behalf?

Searching For The Answer

When the traditional midday nap was challenged in Portugal, the public woke from their slumber to defend it. "Friends of the Siesta" was formed and they sent out a press release that proclaimed that the "siesta is not a vice of deadbeats."

Don't get me wrong, I'm pro-nap. But the key to a successful experience with a placement firm is to not fall asleep during the process. You've got to keep in touch with them on a regular basis to ensure that they're beating the bushes on your behalf. You also need to not put all your eggs in their basket; you need to do your own networking and searching independent of their efforts (although it's a good idea to keep them informed about who you're talking to). I've listed some other search firm considerations below. For more check out Richard Beatty's book "The Resume Kit" (Wiley, 2003).

Does the agency work with the kind of companies that you want to work for? Many placement firms specialize in certain industries, regions or companies. That's why it's important to find out who the firm works with. Check out who they list as their clients on their web site. Or go the opposite route and contact the companies that you want to work for to find out what search firms they use.

Do they understand your background and qualifications? For a placement firm to do the best job on your behalf they have to know what you can and can't do. Look for firms that offer more than a quick glance at your resumé and a handshake. The more that they get to know you, the better the chances that they'll point you in the correct direction.

What are they doing on your behalf? Check in on a regular basis to find out who they are targeting on your behalf and for a status report on how they're doing. Don't be a pest, but also don't let them push you to the back burners.

Do they give you background on the companies they're suggesting that you work for? Since the placement firm isn't hiring you, it's important that they prepare you for the people who will be making the decision. Ask them for background on the industry, the company and the people involved. You will still need to do your own research online and at the library, but at a minimum they should give you a head start. Are they professional? Remember, the firm is representing you. So you want to see a level of professionalism in how they go about doing their—and your—business.

You can't rest just because you've working with a placement firm, you've got to remain an active part of the process.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com-/ABCnews.com online ballot: What is the best way to get a job?

—Use the want ads, 8.1 percent

—Work with a search firm or employment agency, 13 percent

—Go online, 16.3 percent

—Networking, 62.5 percent

(Mr. Rosner, an internationally syndicated columnist, author and speaker, is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@working-wounded.com.)

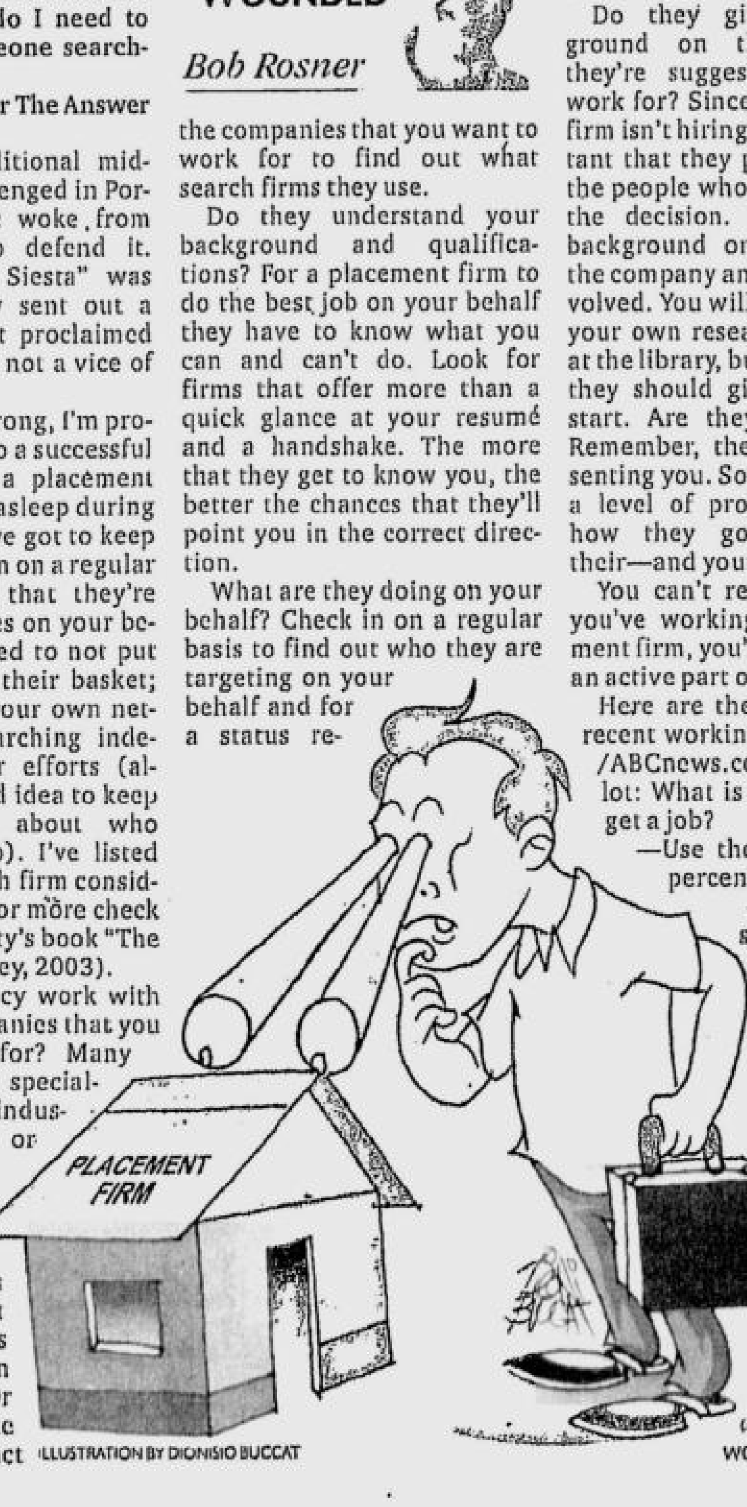

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

Multi-tasking executive heads news channel

MUSNGI

TO SAY that Peter Musngi is a multimedia man is, definitely, an understatement.

As ABS-CBN's vice president for Manila Radio Division, his goal is to ensure that the ABS-CBN radio stations, dzMM and dwRR 101.9 are the country's number one AM and FM stations respectively.

Musngi, who is also ABS-CBN's vice president for sports, breathed new life to the way Filipinos view sports by ABS-CBN UHF Channel Studio 23's coverage of milestone sporting events like the Tour Pilipinas, Philippine Basketball League (PBL), various billiard tournaments, among others. He is also the one responsible for the repackaging of two of the country's biggest amateur leagues, UAAP and NCAA.

New appointment

Musngi, after establishing his mark on the radio and sports scene, is now geared up to revolutionize cable news viewing in the country as he was appointed the new managing director of the ABS-CBN News Channel. "My years in broadcast industry, mainly with ABS-CBN, have prepared me very well for this job," he said when asked of the preparations he did for the new challenge.

He also confesses that his job in ANC is, basically, more of housekeeping. "ANC has become what it is today because of the efforts of its past management teams and people. They should be lauded for doing a very good job," he humbly said.

Barely four months after his appointment, Musngi, aside from keeping things in order, is eyeing to improve ANC's 11 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. time slot. "This is the prime time *kasi* for our *kababayans* abroad," he explained.

Aside from this, he also discloses a very big upcoming project that would enable ANC to reach a wider and bigger market. "But of course, it is still a secret," he said. "We all just have to wait and hope that the project pushes through."

Trust of top management

With everything good that has come his way, he humbly said that, "Sometimes, I feel like I don't deserve all of this. But, I always take it as a challenge." He also disclosed that handling three positions at the same time is not easy but he is very thankful that he has been blessed with so many efficient and very good people. "I am just so lucky that ABS-CBN people are very professional, competent. It makes the job so much easier." Musngi also considers the confidence in him, as an employee, from ABS-CBN's top management as priceless.

"I just point the direction. One of the secrets of managing is to empower your people," he shared when asked of his formula for successfully managing three different jobs. He also acknowledged that behind his success, are a multitude of people. "Whatever success I have, it's never about me alone. I never planned this to happen. It just did and I am thankful."

Defying all odds, the young Peter Musngi, after high school, decided to finish his studies in Manila despite an outstanding scholarship offered to him by his alma mater for being his batch's "most outstanding seminarian." "I just felt like I had to go to Manila," he added.

Accidental disc jockey

Before martial law, fate might have revealed the direction Musngi has to take when he found himself passing an audition to be a disc jockey for ABS-CBN's FM radio, dzYK 101.9. "It was, actually, just an accident. I was just tagging along with a friend who wanted to audition. Luckily, I was the one who passed," he amusingly said. "But after barely a month there, the station stopped its operations because of the declaration of the martial law. It was a short stint but so meaningful in my life," he added.

After that, so many doors of opportunities have opened for him in the broadcast industry. While taking up Accountancy in college, he worked for various radio stations in Metro Manila. "More than anything else, my job as a DJ was more of a hobby than work, it's just that you are getting paid for doing it," he remarked. Though he was doing very well in the job, he acknowledged also that he thought that this is not a permanent source of income. An admitted manic saver, Peter only has this to say, "*Ang gusto ko lang noon, maka-ipon ng pera*. It's so important that you have a fallback."

In 1986, the ABS-CBN FM radio went back on the air with a new name KO 101.9 and ABS-CBN radio management asked Peter to work again for the station. He lightheartedly shared this anecdote, "Since I did not get my first salary from dzYK, Mr. Lopez jokingly told me that the first thing he'll do is give my unclaimed salary. That was how fatherly the late 'Kapitan' was." Then, Musngi realized that he will stay in the business longer than he expected.

Aside from being a disc jockey, he also is tapped to do voice over chores. He admitted that he enjoyed this job because of its pay and the opportunity to hear the works of his labor. "I became quite in demand maybe because everyone in the industry knows that I am professional. Give the producers no problem and take the least time to record and you will be remembered the next time they (producers) have a project."

Promotions

In 1989, he was asked to be dwRR 101.9 FM's station manager. Two years after, dzMM, ABS-CBN's AM station, also had him as its station manager. When asked about the difference of the two, he said, "AM *kasi* tackles everything from news to drama, to talk to commentaries while FM is based primarily on the music taste and lifestyle of the target market of the station. It is very specific in terms of programming."

After many years of immersing himself in radio, Musngi had a time off when he was tapped by ABS-CBN to head a task force analyzing the "digital cable radio" market. However, the project didn't materialize because of the Asian crisis that time.

The year 1998 marks the entry of Musngi into the world of sports via ABS-CBN sponsored basketball league, Metropolitan Basketball Association (MBA), with the late Rolly Cruz. With Musngi at the helm, ABS-CBN, in 2000, sealed agreements with UAAP for Studio 23's coverage of the league. Two years after that, NCAA also gave the station the league's airing rights. Such coverages made Studio 23's appeal more to the younger generation and the leagues' popularity reach greater heights. "It's all about packaging," he said when asked of the miracle he did for the two amateur leagues.

Aside from handling these managerial tasks, Musngi, a certified public accountant, shares his business insights as the host of ABS-CBN's "Kumikitang Kabuhayan" and dzMM's "Radyo Negosyo."

Because of his extensive business background, numerous years in the broadcast industry, undeniable professionalism and indefatigable dedication, Musngi is expected to give ANC a bolder and fresher direction "a direction that would enable ANC to tell the Filipino story best."

How working moms do it

WORKING MOM

Gina Abuyuan

ROMINA Urra-Gonzalez, managing editor of Metro magazine and fashion model, doesn't know it (well she does now), but when she was on maternity leave, I would take sanctuary in her cubicle. I would look at photos of her and husband Monchu, on their honeymoon in Australia, with friends and family, and hide there until the Working Mom staff would holler mommy.

This morning, the honeymoon picture was gone. No, let me get that straight: the photo was still there, but it was hidden behind a piece of paper with Romina's sloping .handwriting: Don't forget the milk.

Sorority

Yes, dears, Romina has now joined the sorority of motherhood. The breast pump is in the big black bag on her cabinet, the bottles of milk are already in the freezer, and pretty soon, photos of little Carmen will take up space amidst the party and beach scenes. Life for her will never be the same again.

She visited my cubicle too, this morning, to ask if our boss, Ernie Lopez, would be away for long so we could convert his office into a playroom—and um, could I bring my 15-month old twins as well? Of course, I said. I'd do anything to be with them while at work. She's ready to set up Carmen's crib. I'm ready to face the wrath of anyone whose files Marco and Mateo might accidentally eat. Or delete.

Romina tells me she cried this morning. While she was on leave and had to leave Carmen for an hour or two to run errands, she comforted herself with the fact that she would be able to spend time with her daughter at the end of the day. Going back to work changed all that, she said. It's not "see you tonight." It's "see you on the weekend." She's right. I myself may have imposed a "get out of here by 7 p.m. rule" on my staff, but most of the time, I'm the one who breaks it. By 30 minutes or a few hours, it doesn't matter—all I know is that when I don't come home early enough, the twins are nodding off to sleep and I will have to wait till morning again to see them play, hear them laugh, feel them hug me and hold me, and hear Mateo say "bamba," and Marco, "baby" (their words for almost anything). It's frustrating, but I know I'll live. It's just one of those things a working (single) mom has to contend with. Work may be what sustains me and props me up, but my children are what nourish me, feed my heart when things are really, really tough.

Romina asks me, "how do you do it, Gins?" Two babies, one little girl, the expenses, the time? She knows my answer even before I say it, because she feels it as well: "You just do what you have to do," we agree.

Doing what must be done

I see Dedet Reyes-Panabi, one of Working Mom's favorite writers and new deputy editorial director, running around checking clearbooks. Her baby son has just been operated on and yet she's here, moving, swift, alert. She's doing what she has to do.

Tinna Bonifacio, managing editor of Star Studio International Editions, another single mom, is here too, checking layouts and coordinating with the US principals. Julian, her teenage son, is with her. She's lucky he's old enough not to eat paper. She's doing what she has to do.

So forgive me for being a bit somber today, as I write this column. It's 21 minutes past deadline, my eyes are hungry for sleep, and I feel I haven't hugged my daughter enough this morning. I'm just doing what I have to do.

(Gina Abuyuan is editor in chief of Working Mom magazine. She promises a happier, chattier tone-heck, there's even something about sex on the sly!-in the April issue of Working Mom. Get your copy [now in a bigger, better size!] today, with Cherie Gil and lovely daughter Bianca on the cover. Feedback is welcome at gina_abuyuan@abs.pinoycentral.com.*)*

To find a job quickly, try 'temp' work

By Richard Evans

MANY people assume that temporary or contract employees are "second-rate" employees, who can't get a "real job" or are just irresponsible, hopping from one job to another. Oftentimes, "temps" or contractuals are not taken seriously. Temporary or contract work is often viewed negatively too because of the short-term duration of the job with no security of tenure.

However, many professionals in the Philippines and in other countries, those just starting out in their careers and those who have years of experience behind them, have discovered that temporary or contract work is a great strategy to help them get what they want out of their careers.

Likewise, many businesses have discovered that temporary employees or contract workers provide a viable way to manage staffing levels in line with their needs.

Need for contractors

There are many reasons for needing flexible staffing solutions. There can be work overload, special projects, or even a temporary replacement for a regular employee who is on vacation or maternity leave.

When something important or out of the ordinary comes up, companies will look for outside resources to perform the task on a temporary basis. Companies can then retain permanent staff to focus on core business functions while having access to flexible resources when they need them.

Types of flexible work

Flexible work takes two main forms. Temporary work is normally a quality short-term job. Contract work, on the other hand, is often work from six months to two years under a fixed contract term.

This means you have choices about when you work and how long for.

Temporary and contract positions are available in virtually every industry. Call center and industrial or manufacturing sectors are industries that are always looking for temporary workers.

Hot industries

Other industries such as technical, industrial, contact center, engineering, banking, IT and telecommunications hire temporaries for clerical, administration and human resource functions.

For contract work, again the call center industry tops the list of companies looking for workers as customer service representatives. Other industries such as engineering, finance, and information technology also hire a lot of contract workers.

This means you can get work in a wide variety of industries and gain really good experience.

Advantages

There are several advantages of working as a temporary or contract worker.

1. Improved employment opportunities. With a wider experience in different industries and jobs, you become more employable as you build your skills.

2. Permanent employment opportunities. Temporary or contract work is a great way to test a company or an industry. Many young professionals don't know if they will work better in a big or a small organization. "Temping" or contractual work is a way you can learn about an organization's culture and eventually become a full-time employee.

3. A stepping stone to career change. "Temping" is also a good strategy to test a new industry when you are changing career directions.

4. Good pay and benefits. The pay and benefits of temporary and contract work are comparable to permanent work.

5. The chance to earn extra income. "Temping" is a way for you to earn an extra income as you can work short-term when you are available.

6. Work when you want it. If you like the flexibility of working for a while and having time off between jobs to spend with your family or your academic pursuits, then "temping" is a work solution for you.

Viable option

Temporary or contract work is a growing, reputable employment choice for many people. As a viable option in today's competitive economy, temporary and contract work is available for anyone who is actively looking for work.

There are also some people who don't want permanent positions at all because of the variety of jobs available in temporary work. People work part-time, full-time, month on, month off. Practically anyone can temp. The opportunities are there in so many companies.

Choosing a staffing agency

To find out if your agency is reputable, ask questions about benefits, training, and pay conditions. If you want more, find a professional staffing agency that, aside from good pay, gives you regular work with its clients, unique benefits, free training to better equip you with the right skills, the right job that matches your skills and career directions, and performance rewards to recognize your achievements at work.

Today's professional staffing firms can open the door to a host of temporary, contract and permanent positions in virtually every employment sector. Ask your former employers which staffing firms they use.

Visit a staffing firm's web site to see what types of jobs it posts. You need to find out how the firm can help you meet your career goals. Most of all, maintain regular contact with the firm after you have registered until you're employed. Once you accept a job assignment, do your best to complete it. Try to be inquisitive to make your job search bring about promising opportunities.

(Richard Evans is the general manager of Manpower Outsourcing Services Inc., a wholly-owned Philippine subsidiary of Manpower, Inc. To get more information on temp work, call Manpower at 878-2700 or e-mail your resume at jobs@manpower.com.ph.*)*

No Shy Violet: PURPLE PEAR BAR'S CYNTHIA LUCERO

by Cathleen C. Giongco

The color violet has long been associated with all things majestic and regal. The same holds true with Purple Pear bar owner Cynthia Robles-Lucero. After all, this feisty lady is someone you might consider royalty – in the restaurant industry, that is.

Born into the family behind the successful Restaurante Robles chain of bistros, Cynthia literally grew up with a silver spoon in her mouth. With her family's restaurant kitchens as her playrooms, it was assumed by many that the only daughter of Ambassador Nicandro Robles III and world-renowned food and wine connoisseur Karen Estrada-Robles would someday join the field of food service. And like icing on the cake that seemed to seal her career's fate, Cynthia met and married Eric Lucero, a scion of the clan who owns Luscious Cakes and Pastries, the country's foremost bakeshop franchise.

However, the cultural phenomenon that is the 1980s happened in the way of her destiny. A teenager during this carefree decade – known for its breakaway styles and attitude – Cynthia took up what was considered a common pastime among the young new wave crowd. "I hit the social scene early, and hit it with gusto! Rumors, Mars, Faces, Wherelse?, Zigzag... name the disco and I most probably wore off my shoes on its dance floor. And being the gimmick girl that I am, I, along with my *barkada* – with our tsunami hairstyles, pastel neckties and boots – became regulars of dance showdowns and clubhouse parties," she shares.

Three years after graduating with a degree in International Hotel Management from the prestigious Hotel Institute Montreux in Switzerland (a short distance away from magnificent Lake Geneva), Cynthia joined Restaurante Robles as a purchaser, very typical of children of restaurant-owning families who'd enter their business and rise from the ranks. The former wild child appeared to have mellowed down, especially following the births of her 2 precocious boys, Mark, now 12 and Dominic, now 9. Less than a year later, she left the restaurant and settled into domesticity in Vienna, where husband Eric was assigned to be the General Manager of Luscious bakeshop's European commissary.

However, her desire for good times never completely went away. "While I enjoyed taking care of my sons and would never trade the time I spent attending to them for the world, I occasionally longed to go out, to be with friends and party. And being in Austria – far from my loved ones but near Germany and its popular Oktoberfest – certainly didn't make things easier for me," Cynthia quips.

PURPLE PEAR

LADY IN PURPLE. Cynthia Robles-Lucero at her beloved bar.

Fortunately for Cynthia, she discovered a way to merge her family's business heritage and the interests of her teenage years. In 2001, soon after she and Eric re-established their family in the Philippines, she got lost driving home and stumbled upon a dark Makati avenue which looked forgotten by time. Along the street was an imposing structure of brick and stone which she was inexplicably drawn to. "The whole area was quiet and dark," Cynthia recalls, "but somehow, my heart was thumping in my chest whenever I would look at this particular building. And surprisingly, it wasn't a scared type of thumping, it was similar to the feeling I had when dancing in afternoon discos as a teen."

PARTY PEOPLE. Cynthia (2nd from left) with Purple Pear regulars Norman Agatep, Gail Velasquez, Jerson Morales and Gerald Santos.

And so with this unusual kind of business 'gut feel' and a P7.5 million capital, Cynthia set up the Purple Pear Bar along Figuerres St. in Makati City. Even when eventually new restos, bars and other gimmick places mushroomed nearby, the Purple Pear remained king. Maybe it's partly because of the air of mystery it gives off to the partying public. But mostly, it's because of the smart business acumen of the woman behind it.

"I am very hands-on with Purple Pear, I insist on attending to every single detail concerning my business: from the design of my bar's interior down to the selection of the entrees, liquor and even the plates and glasses we use, as well as the training of my staff," she says. While Cynthia is definitely someone who knows how to have fun, as an employer, she is meticulous, organized, strict and above all, demanding. "Being in the entertaining business doesn't mean my staff can take things easy," she asserts. "I expect nothing less than excellent grooming, excellent manners, excellent habits and excellent service all the time." A typical Virgo, Cynthia is a stickler for rules and expects everyone working with and for her to abide by them. As a result, she is well known in the business circle as driven and shrewd, even to the point of being ruthless. "I don't let these comments get to me," she reacts, "all I know is that I must work to protect the interest of my business which I worked so hard for. If this means not satisfying everybody then that's how it is. I work to satisfy my customers first and always," she states.

"It's important for me to establish rapport with my crew." Cynthia with the members of her staff, bartenders Leo Cruz, Gian Enriquez and security supervisor Epifanio Apacible.

Indeed, Cynthia Lucero must be doing something right – because unlike others who consider the color green lucky but have yet to meet lady luck, for this woman who turned her 'hobby' into a successful business, nothing is luckier than the color of the thousands of hundred-peso bills that flow into her bar every night.

For previous chapters & clues, log on to www.inquestor.com

To answer the question in Chapter 7, text INQ Q<question #> <answer> (Ex: INQ Q1 E) to 2320 for Globe/Touch Mobile and Sun Cellular subscribers or 309 for Smart/Addict/Talk 'N Text subscribers. Maximum of 3 text answers per question. Send in your answers by April 6 to qualify for the preliminary draw on April 11.

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One (1) Unit Reconditioned Japan Surplus Wheel Loader as specified

The list of pre-qualification requirements is now available at the BAC Secretariat, Provincial General Services Office (PGSO) Dumaguete City, with Tel/Fax #: (035) 225-2433.

The Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on April 15, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at the PGSO while the submission and opening of bids is scheduled on April 28, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. also at the same venue.

The Committee on Awards reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any required formality and award the contract to the bidder whose bid proposal as evaluated by the Committee is the most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) ATTY. ISMAEL P. MARTINEZ
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
Provincial General Services Officer

(PDI–April 6, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Dillman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS "AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING: April 19 & 21, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1, Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C.

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MIN. BID PRICE
	Schedule-I April 19, 2005	
-1-	One (1) Lot of Unserviceable items consisting of assorted scrap metals, plant/office equipment, junk motor vehicles and forklift, pipes, radiators, motors and cooling-tower parts, stators and obsolete drilling materials. All items are located at Mak-Ban GPP Complex, Bay Town, Laguna Province.	P3,563,000.00 Per lot
-2-	One (1) Lot of Unserviceable/used Wood Pallets, approximately 600 pieces. Located at Mak-Ban GPP Complex.	P9,000.00 Per lot
-3-	One (1) Lot of Unserviceable Chemicals consisting of Barite, approx. 4,114 bags. Located at Mak-Ban GPP Complex.	P185,130.00 Per lot
	Schedule-II April 19, 2005	
-1-	One (1) Lot of Used Lube Oil, net of water, approximately 150 drums (drums not included). Located at Mak-Ban GPP.	P400.00 Per drum
-2-	One (1) Lot of Unserviceable/Busted Batteries, approximately 213 pieces. Located at Mak-Ban GPP Complex.	P25,560.00 Per lot
-3-	One (1) Lot of Unserviceable/Busted Batteries, approx. 312 pieces. Located at Sucat TPP, Alabang, MuntingLupa City.	P31,200.00 Per lot
	Schedule-III April 21, 2005	
-1-	One (1) Lot Unserviceable/Junk Motor Vehicles and Substation Equipment including used tires, batteries and air-con units. Located at TRANSCO Carmen S/S in Cagayan De Oro City and at TRANSCO Natumulan S/S in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental Province.	P273,300.00 Per lot
-2-	One (1) Lot Unserviceable/Junk Motor Vehicles and Substation/Plant/Office Equipment including Transmission Line Hardware Steel Tower Parts and used empty steel drums. Located at TRANSCO Tayabas S/S in Tayabas Town, Quezon Province.	P234,240.00 Per lot
-3-	One (1) Lot Unserviceable/Junk Items consisting of Steel Tower Parts, guy wires, Transformer casings, steel reels, GI sheets, spacers, Reo Truck, Fork-lift, water tank, bolts and nuts, steel frames, suspension insulators, gantry crane, radiators and copper windings. Located at Ligao stockyard in Ligao City (Albay Province).	P220,000.00 Per lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL PRICE OFFER.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY.
3. APPROPRIATE AND VALID EMB-DENR ACCREDITATIONS FOR SCHEDULE-II ITEMS.

All interested parties who wish to secure the bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Income Tax Return (2004 original or BIR certified copy) and valid identification card with picture (such as Company IDs, Passport, Driver's License, PRC Licensure Card, etc.). Interested parties for Schedule-II must present valid and original EMD-DENR accreditations.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuniad, Jr./Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.,-1, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 PM, April 18, 2005 for Schedule-I & Schedule-II and April 20, 2005 for Schedule-III.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) FELIX B. TACATA, JR.
OIC, MMD

(PDI--April 4, 5 & 6, 2005)

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

In consonance with R.A. 8976 otherwise known as the Philippine Food Fortification Act of 2000, the National Food Authority (NFA) as the implementing agency on iron fortified rice, wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on April 28, 2005 at 10:00 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City among all interested suppliers for the supply of THREE HUNDRED METRIC TONS (300 MT), MAXIMUM IRON COATED RICE GRAIN PREMIX with an approved budget of Php69.6 M, packed in twenty five (25) or fifty (50) kg capacity nitrogen or vacuum sealed laminated film bag as primary packaging and multi-walled paper used as secondary packaging (strong enough to withstand handling). Detailed product specifications shall be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Delivery period at designated NFA Manila warehouse/s shall be not later than 15 August 2005 and with BUYER'S option for an early delivery.

All interested suppliers are required to submit price offers in Philippine Currency, (inclusive of all taxes) as specified in the NFA Bid Form.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the approved budget of Php69.6 M in the form of Cash, Cashier's and/or Manager's Check or an irrevocable L/C issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila.

List of Eligibility Requirements and instruction to Bidders may be secured thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Manager, Department for Marketing Operations, 5th Flr., NFA Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City, Telephone Nos. 712-1564, 743-86-96 or 712-3341 Loc. 8513 starting March 30, 2005.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Bid Documents will likewise be available starting March 30, 2005 up to April 19, 2005 (8:00 AM-5:00 PM) upon payment of a Php15,000.00 non-refundable fee.

The **Pre-Bidding** conference will be held on **April 14, 2005, at 10:00 AM** at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

Submission of eligibility requirements, technical proposal and price offers will be between 8:00 AM to 9:55 AM at the NFA Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City on **April 28, 2005. Opening of bids** will start at exactly 10:00 AM.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals to waive any required or defect therein and accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) **JESSUP P. NAVARRO**
Deputy Administrator
and Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–March 30 and April 6, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE
PROVINCIAL GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE
Capitol Building, Dipolog City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

FOR THE PLANNING, DESIGN, SITE DEVELOPMENT, AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE PROVINCIAL HOSPITAL IN THE CITY OF DIPOLOG, PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE.

The Sangguniang Panlalawigan of the Province of Zamboanga del Norte has approved the flotation of up to P310M Abante Zanorte Bonds to finance the planning, design, site development and construction of the Zamboanga del Norte Provincial Hospital located in the City of Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte. All interested proponents with the following qualifications are invited to pre-qualify and submit proposals for the planning, design, construction and site development of the said project.

1. PCAB/IAC CATEGORY – AAA and large "B" for buildings and industrial plants
2. Must be capable of undertaking the planning, design, site development and construction of a tertiary level hospital pursuant to the guidelines of the Department of Health
3. Must be willing to undertake the project and be paid in the form of Abante Zanorte Bonds with final maturity of up to seven (7) years from the date of issuance.

All interested proponents are hereby advised to obtain the Terms of Reference (TOR) from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat Office upon submission of a letter of intent to pre-qualify and payment of the amount of P40,000.00 on or before 12:00 P.M. of 08 April 2005.

The letter of intent to pre-qualify shall be addressed to the Chairman, Office of the BAC, Dipolog City, Province of Zamboanga del Norte.

The Province of Zamboanga del Norte reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive any informality or defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Province.

(Sgd.) **BAC Chairman**

(PDI- March 30, 2005)

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Yes	No	
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☐	☐	*Do you have at least 2 yrs experience in client-services - advertising, marketing, hotel, pharma-marketing, etc.?*
☐	☐	*Are you career-oriented, smart and motivated enough to deserve a rewarding starting salary and perks?*
☐	☐	*Are you qualified to work in any of the following positions:* EVENTS MARKETING SPECIALIST / INTERIOR DESIGNER, MARKETING OR CLIENT SERVICES ASST. OR MANAGER

If you qualify, please email resume in MS Word with picture to:
profileoverseas@globelines.com.ph

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

CONTRACT FOR MANPOWER SERVICES

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the engagement of a Service Firm to provide the manpower service requirements for various offices/branches of the SSS.

Lot No.	Location	Personnel Requirement	Approved Budget for the Contract
1	Main Office	635	P 81,115,000.00
2	NCR	285	P 34,628,000.00
3	Luzon	229	P 27,824,000.00
4	Visayas	199	P 24,178,000.00
5	Mindanao	146	P 17,739,000.00
TOTAL		1,494	P 185,484,000.00

Source of Fund : Service Bureau Expenses
Contract Duration : One (1) year

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements	April 06 to 25, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	May 02, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P50,000.00	May 09, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-bid Conference	May 12, 2005 2:00 pm	Bidding Room, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491.

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act."

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI–April 6, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF SOUTHERN LUZON
PPA Training Center Compound, R. Oca Street, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 301-9579 / 301-9672

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Ports Authority-Port District Office of Southern Luzon (PPA-PDOSL for brevity) invites prospective bidders to submit their eligibility requirements and bid documents and participate in the public bidding, to be conducted pursuant to Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, or the provision of Security Services for the period of two (2) years, commencing on 01 July 2005 and ending on 30 June 2007, in its offices mentioned below:

Areas covered	No. of Guards
1 Port District Office	7
2. Port Management Offices of	
a. Batangas	64
b. Calapan	39
c. Legazpi	62
d. Puerto Princesa	31
	203

The proposed contract has an approved budget of fifty four million two hundred fifty three thousand two hundred pesos, Philippine currency, (PhP 54,253,200.00) which is to be charged against the corporate budget of the Philippine Ports Authority.

The value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract and similar to the contract to be bid (completed as of May 12, 2005), adjusted to the current price using the whole sale consumer price index, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid otherwise it shall not be allowed to apply.

I. ISSUANCE OF APPLICATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID FORMS

Application for eligibility and bid forms may be secured from the Secretariat of Port District Security Bids and Awards Committee (PDSBAC for brevity) starting on 14 April 2005 until 28 April 2005, from 8:00AM to 6:00 PM, at the PPA-PDO Southern Luzon Office, PPA Training Center Compound, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila. Said documents will be furnished the prospective bidders after payment of a non-refundable amount of two thousand pesos, Philippine currency. (PhP 2,000.00), exclusive of VAT.

II. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference shall be on 28 April 2005, 10:00 AM, at Conference Room of the Philippine Ports Authority Port District of Southern Luzon, PPA Training Center Compound, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila.

III. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND BID DOCUMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

Submission of Eligibility requirements and Bid documents shall not be later than 10:00 AM on 12 May 2005 to the Secretariat of the Port District Security Bids and Awards Committee, also at Conference Room of the Philippine Ports Authority-Port District of Southern Luzon, PPA Training Center Compound, South Harbor, Port Area, Manila.

Only the bids of eligible bidders will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their duly authorized representatives, as evidenced by the Special Power of Attorney/Board Resolution. The opening of bids shall be done right after the checking of the eligibility requirements.

IV. BID SECURITY

Prospective bidders shall post a bid security in the form and amount, indicated below

Form of Bid Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and half percent (1-1/2%)
Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2-1/2%)

The award shall be made not only on the basis of the bid price but also on the sufficiency of the supplies, equipment and administrative supervision to be provided

The PPA-PDOSL BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or offers which it may consider to be disadvantageous and not beneficial to the Authority and may waive any defect or informality therein.

6th day of April 2005, Manila.

HECTOR E. MIOLE
Port District Manager and Chairman, PDS-BAC

(PDI - April 6 & 13, 2005)

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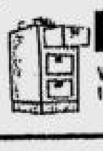

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Day before publication	every Thursday

Corazon Lazatin Pecson

Peacefully joined our Lord & her husband ***Don Juan Francisco C. Pecson*** *on April 5, 2005 at the age of 92.*

Her bereaved children **Arthur** & **Cecile**, **Victoria** (†) & **Reynaldo Zapata**, **Lorenzo**, **Serafin** & **Karen**; sister **Carmen S. Lazatin**; grandchildren **Ricky** & **Grace**, **Josine** & **Jojo**, **Jay**, **Kristin**, **Robert**, **Rosalie** & **Bong**, **Reggie** & **Ronald**, **Raffy** & **Mia** and great grandchildren, request the pious readers to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Lazatin Ancestral House, San Fernando, Pampanga.

Interment will follow after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Fernando on Friday, April 8, 2005.

In lieu of flowers, donations to the Mother of Good Counsel Seminary Burse will be deeply appreciated.

Elisa Casuso Rodriguez

April 13, 1910 – April 4, 2005

Her bereaved family **Cecilia** & **Antonio** (†) **Jose**, **Rufino** & **Emily Santa Ana**, **Anthonette** & **Edgardo Cantada**, **Antonio Jr.** (†) & **Elsa Rodriguez**, grandchildren and great grandchildren request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Marian Memorial Chapels, Marcos Highway, Antipolo City.

Interment will take place on Friday, April 8, 2005 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the Holy Mass at 9:00 a.m.

APOLINAR L. GUEVARRA, SR.

of Meycauayan, Bulacan passed away peacefully in the grace of the Lord on 02 April 2005 at the age of 71.

His bereaved wife **Leoncia** and children **Meynard** & **Cynthia**, **Helen** & **Gerry Fernando**, **Hermie** & **Loy Morales**, **Abeck** & **Jun Cubacub**, **Carol** & **Dingdong Pesayco**, **Apolinar Jr.** & **Emma**, **Cecil** & **Chito Poyaoan**, **Carrie** & **Dino Zuñiga**, and **Concon** & **Andrew Copon**, brother **Efren** and sister **Dorina G. Pineda**, grandchildren, and other relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the family residence at No. 5 Calle Fabrica, Malhacan, Meycauayan, Bulacan. Interment will be on Saturday, 09 April 2005, at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the Meycauayan Memorial Park at Pandayan, Meycauayan, Bulacan.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

So Lovingly Remembered

on his

Twenty-First Death Anniversary

ANTONIO G. DULALIA

who joined his Creator on April 7, 1984

Masses will be offered tomorrow April 7, Thursday, at the following churches:

Sta. Maria della Strada Parish, Katipunan Avenue, Q.C.	6:00 a.m.
Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows, Q.C.	7:00 a.m.
University of Sto. Tomas Church, España Blvd., Manila	7:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Kanlaon, Q.C.	7:30 a.m.
Sta. Cruz Church, Sta. Cruz, Manila	8:00 a.m.
Basilica of the Black Nazarene (Quiapo Church), Manila	8:00 a.m.
Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Ave., Q.C.	8:00 a.m.
Mount Carmel Shrine, Doña Juana Rod., Q.C.	6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati	6:00 p.m.
Mary de Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 p.m.
Sanctuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan	6:15 p.m.
St. James Parish, Ayala Alabang Vill., Muntinlupa	6:30 p.m.

Relatives, friends, and pious readers are requested to remember him in their prayers.

"For God so loved the World, that He gave us His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have Everlasting life."

—John 3:16

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die." **John 11:25-26**

Justiniano S. Montano, Sr.

(Former Senator & Congressman of Cavite)

*Our dearest "**Tata**" peacefully joined his Creator*
*and his beloved wife, **Ligaya**, on March 31, 2005 at the age of 99.*

His children **Ciriaco** (†) and **Josefina Casimiro**,
Delfin (†) and **Virginia Cacha** (†), **Lolita** and **Nestor Canoy**,
Irene and **Walfrido de los Angeles** (†), **Julian** and **Nilda Ramos**,
Consolacion (†) and **Rogelio Manalo**,
Justiniano Jr. (†) and **Eleanor Marayag**, his grandchildren,
great grandchildren, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends
request fervent prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Parish Hall of Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills and will be brought to his hometown, Amaya, Tanza in Cavite on Wednesday, 6 April 2005 after a Holy Mass at 8:00 a.m.

Interment will be at the JSM Memorial in Tanza, Cavite on Friday, 8 April 2005 at 12:00 noon following the celebration of the Holy Mass at 10:00 a.m. at the Sto. Rosario Parish Church in Amaya, Tanza, Cavite.

Novena Masses will be held at 7:30 p.m. at Santuario de San Jose on April 5 & 9, and at JSM Memorial in Tanza, Cavite on April 6 to 8 culminating on the 9th day with Holy Masses to be celebrated on April 9 at 9:30 a.m. in Amaya, Cavite and at 7:30 p.m. at the Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills.

BUSINESS

DOF open to oil tariff rollback

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said it was amenable to the proposal to roll back the import duty on imported oil products from 5 percent to 3 percent, on condition that Congress passes the bill to reform the value-added tax system.

According to Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan, the government can give up the additional revenue from the increase in oil tariff if the VAT measure—expected to generate more revenues—was implemented.

"We are not negative to that proposal. In fact, we are open to that," Bonoan said in an interview with reporters.

He added that the DOF has even suggested that Congress bring down the oil tariff once the VAT was passed.

The government earlier estimated that it could generate over P5 billion in additional revenue a year from the increase in oil tariffs.

But it expects to earn more from the VAT reform plan, which will withdraw the tax exemption currently enjoyed by petroleum products.

The VAT reform plan is seen as the biggest revenue contributor among all revenue-raising measures pushed by the Arroyo administration to address its fiscal problem.

The lifting of VAT exemptions and the increase in the VAT rate were expected to generate a combined additional revenue of over P60 billion a year.

The oil tariff, which covers crude and refined petroleum products except cooking gas, was raised to 5 percent from 3 percent last January as a temporary revenue-raising measure for the cash-strapped government.

But government officials earlier vowed to restore the tariff to 3 percent once a bill raising oil taxes was approved.

Under the DOF's proposal, the VAT rate will be raised from 10 to 12 percent and the VAT exemption of several products and services—including those rendered by lawyers and doctors—will be lifted.

The government has received suggestions to roll back the tariff on oil as crude oil prices in the world market continued to soar.

Increasing oil prices was one of the main reasons behind the spike in inflation in March to 8.5 percent, which exceeded the full-year inflation target of between 5 and 6 percent.

SMC seen to raise bid for Aussie food firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL Corp. (SMC), Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, is said to have raise its bid for the acquisition of the Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd. to at least A$1.9 billion.

SMC officials have refused to comment on the reported raise in stake.

But the Australian Financial Review has reported without citing its sources that it is expecting SMC to increase its existing A$5.90 per share offer worth a total of A$1.75 billion within the next few days.

Industry sources also told the INQUIRER that the food and beverage firm will make the announcement within the week.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), SMC said "it would make a disclosure when a decision is made on its bid for National Foods."

The development comes in the wake of another minor victory for SMC when the Australian Takeovers Panel decided to force rival bidder Fonterra Foods to make additional disclosures on its own bid for National Foods.

But on Monday, the Australian Takeovers Panel, a semi-government regulatory body that oversees complaints and issues on takeovers, said that it would not make a "declaration of unacceptable circumstances" regarding the petition SMC lodged against rival bidder Fonterra Foods over the acquisition of National Foods.

Foreign analysts familiar with the issue told the INQUIRER that this meant SMC's complaint against Fonterra Foods was already moot and academic since Fonterra had made the necessary additional disclosures on its proposed joint venture with National Foods and French firms Sodima and Yoplait.

The disclosures were made to correct what would otherwise have been material omissions in Fonterra's bidding statements.

Industry sources said SMC is pleased with the development because of the additional disclosures made by its rival Fonterra.

Such disclosures would indirectly clarify how much its rival group would be effectively paying to take over National Foods, the sources said.

SMC earlier said Fonterra Foods had not made adequate disclosures of the terms of the joint venture.

The proposed joint venture will come into effect once Fonterra owns all the shares of National Foods.

Big companies extend helping hand to SMEs

SOME of the country's biggest corporations have signed on for the program of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines to help develop the workforce of small and medium-scale enterprises.

Ecop president Rene Y. Soriano said that under the Ecop Big-Enterprise Small Enterprise (EBESE) scheme, representatives from the big corporations will provide SME employees with a three-day training on increasing productivity and other logistical support.

The initial 19 big partners in EBESE are Yazaki-Torres Manufacturing, San Miguel Corp., Toyota Motors Philippines, On-Semiconductor, YKK Philippines, Philippine Batteries, Nestle Philippines, Unilever, Smart, IMI, Jollibee, Ford Philippines, Express Commissary, Fujitsu Ten, Philippine Auto Component, Fujitsu, Yutaka Manufacturing, Philippines Carpet Manufacturing and Takanichi Philippines.

EBESE initially covers the National Capital Region and southern Tagalog provinces (Calabarzon).

As of March 2005, more than 150 owners, managers and supervisors of 50 SME-beneficiaries have participated in the productivity training program.

"The small firms are vulnerable unless they are assisted in improving the level of productivity of their managers, supervisors and workers," he said.

EBESE is a program of the Ecop Institute for Productivity and Competitiveness led by Yazaki-Torres president, Feliciano L. Torres.

It is conducted in partnership with the Technology Application and Promotion Institute (TAPI) of the Department of Science and Technology and the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) of the Department of Labor and Employment.

"Our love for cooking led us to success. And BPI Family Savings Bank's passion to help entrepreneurs like us continues to serve as an inspiration."

Dr. Ricardo and Julita Urbina
Owners, Laguna Garden Café
Cebu City

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A husband and wife tandem with an undying passion for cooking paved the way for the creation of Café Laguna. It all began when Dr. Ricardo Urbina, a physician in the military, was assigned in Cebu. He took with him his whole family to the flourishing city and decided to stay there for good.

Meanwhile, his wife Julita who came from a long line of fine cooks, started to share her culinary expertise with the Cebuanos. Her love for cooking began at a very young age being exposed to the restaurant business owned by her mother.

With the help and encouragement of her husband, Mrs. Urbina opened her own carinderia in 1979. With just 10 tables located at the Urbina's apartment in Lahug, it served Filipino food with a unique and distinctive taste. The small carinderia known as Café Laguna became an instant hit. Cebuanos especially loved the puto-bumbong and this has become the trademark of Café Laguna.

Today, Café Laguna and its branch Laguna Garden Café, have been transformed into places of fine dining. They have become landmarks for tourists and locals visiting Cebu.

With the help of BPI Family Savings Bank's SME Business Loans, Café Laguna has expanded to include branches in Cebu Business Park, Ayala Center-Cebu and a franchise in Cagayan De Oro City. The Urbinas were also able to build their centerpiece building in Biliran Road, Cebu Business Park.

With BPI Family Savings Bank's unrelenting support, the Urbina family has continuously touched the lives of so many Cebuanos through their restaurant and its catering service, proving that the best way to anyone's heart is through delicious cooking.

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Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

DY Buncio and Ginia Domingo, Ford's AVP sales and finance, with the Ranger, Coty-P's pickup of the year

DORIA with Accord

RP motorheads lay groundwork for car buyers, makers

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE PHILIPPINES is now not just a dumping ground for older model cars. It's becoming another melting pot of the latest vehicles at pace with those showcased in countries all over the world.

This validates local car shows and awards for the best vehicles in the country.

One promising example would be the The Manila Motor Show at the World Trade Center, Manila, from April 28 to 30. The Manila Motor Show promises to do away with the *tiangge* (flea market) approach prevalent among local auto shows.

The MMS will have new model public debuts, special vehicles, press days and will have a special open-space-style exhibition setups similar to Bangkok and Tokyo motorshows.

Better-packaged products

And in the arena of car awards, the 46-member Car of the Year Philippines (Coty-P) has provided a venue for carmakers to showcase their latest units in their best light-subjected to instrumented and subjective driving tests among the country's seasoned motoring journalists.

"Car of the Year will push us manufacturers to come up with better-packaged products, that will make the job of motoring journalists more challenging. In the end, Filipino consumers will benefit from better journalism and better product packages," said Arnel Doria, Honda Cars Philippines Inc.'s deputy head for marketing.

The Accord 3-liter V6 was accorded overall the first Car of the Year. Honda Cars Philippines has informed its affiliates outside the Philippines, and has said these affiliates were happy to hear such an achievement. The Accord is an import from Thailand. Nevertheless, HCPI has "adopted" it as one of its own.

Varied choices

"(The Car of The Year Awards) shows the Filipino market that the choices are varied for their hard-earned money. Car buying is always a major decision for everyone and we believe Coty has helped in educating the public that the choices for brand-new vehicles are wide and varied," said Toyota Motors Philippines Inc.'s media relations officer Ariel de Jesus.

Toyota's Vios won in Coty-P's super mini category.

Mazda Philippines, which won the media's choice category for its Mazda3, expressed its intention to join the 2005 awards as it planned to field in more exciting units for this year.

Fielding more units

Ford Philippines' vice president for sales and marketing Luie Dy Buncio said the American carmaker will field in more units in different categories for Coty-P's evaluation. The Ford Ranger and the RS Lynx won for their respective categories.

"Having been a motoring journalist for a good number of years I know the difficulties in making a competent selection in a slew of very competitive cars and the struggle to make a good and proper decision. To have gone through the meat grinder with 40 of the country's motorheads means that our efforts to make the X-Trail perform as it has, has not gone to waste," said Nissan Motor Philippines Inc.'s market and product planning manager Raymond Tribdino. The X-Trail won in the light SUV category.

NMPI, as such, had prepared a complete marketing program to take advantage of the award.

"Dealers are on fire with this win, using it well to make sure the X-Trail's (winning factors) are used in the sales context. At the plant, everyone is gung-ho (because of the award)," added Tribdino.

Motivation

The credibility of the Coty-P system, he said, provides the motivation for Nissan to improve on the X-Trail so that the product can retain its award in 2005. "Once we have started it, we cannot back down on it," stressed Tribdino.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., winner of the AUV of the Year for its Adventure, had posted such banners in its plant motivating its employees.

Arlan Antonio S. Reyes Jr., senior supervisor for advertising and promo of Mitsubishi, said MMPC is planning to create a print media campaign anchored on this achievement and would be published in due time. It is also sending collaterals to its dealers so they could display these in their respective showrooms.

Viking Cars Inc.'s Lyn Manalansang-Buena, vice president for marketing services, said the dealership was looking forward to fielding in more models, especially the new engine variants Viking Cars plans to bring in this year like the Volvo S40 T5 and the Volvo XC90 V8.

"We are proud and very happy to have won the Best Luxury Sedan and Best Safety package. We look forward with much anticipation to next year's Car of the Year awards," said Buena.

Wish list

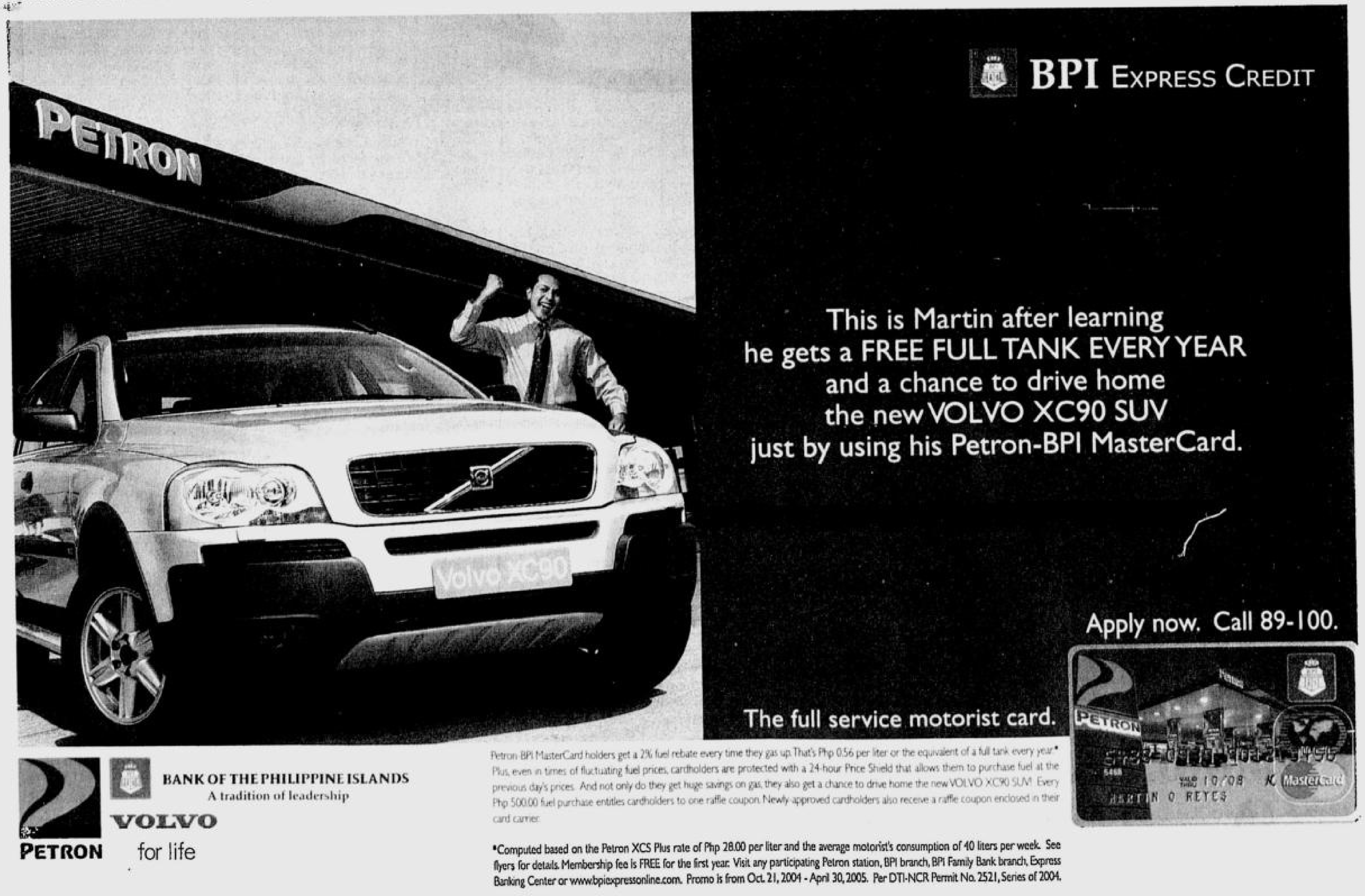
James Lim, president of General Motors Philippines, suggests Coty-P should promote its awards more prominently, and get sponsorships from print media and TV stations as he describes these media "are beneficiaries of a robust motor industry."

GMPh won in the SUV category for its Chevy Trailblazer.

Lim took note of the fact that Coty-P prohibited carmakers from sponsoring the awards to avoid undue influences and biases in favor of generous carmakers.

For Froilan Dytianquin, assistant vice president for marketing services of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp., endorsements from Campi (Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines) would always be welcome, as this

RP/ B2-2



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Batangas gears up for Asian Formula 3 experience

By Charles E. Buban

WITH SPEED, precision driving maneuvers and excitement, Asian Formula 3 is one of the most emotive events on the country's local motorsports calendar, drawing hundreds of followers under its spell.

EXPECT close-quarter fights in this year's edition of AF3.

In just a few days, the Addict Mobile Asian Formula 3 Super Prix will be on our doorsteps when its 2005 season kicks off—with the first two legs happening at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas, on April 9 and 10.

Now on its fifth season, the 6-leg, 12-race series is highlighted by changes in team composition as well as a couple of new faces.

According to AF3 Corp. chair Eduardo "Eddie" Peña, this only shows the dynamism of the race that he helped organize in 2001.

Winning momentum

Leading the cast of this year's participants is team Christian Jones Motorsport with driver and last year's overall champion, Australian Christian Jones, looking to carry on his winning momentum together with teammate Filipino John Marcelo.

Last year's runner-up, Irishman John O'Hara returns for team Fujitsu-Ten Toyota Team Tom's who will race with teammates Renan Morales (who finished second overall in last year's Philippine Junior Touring Car Championship) and 18-year-old Portuguese driver Rodolfo Avila, the youngest-ever driver to compete in the 2004 Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix.

Indonesian Ananda Mikola, fresh from his overall championship finish in the last leg of last year's race, will try to do much better, this time driving for newcomer team Fastron Racing with Three Bond.

Jumping to next level

Last year's Promotions Class AF3 champion, 17-year-old Tyson Sy, jumps to the next level as he now attempts to compete in the Overall Class for his new team, Speedtech Asia and teammate Jason Paul "JP" Cariño.

Dado Peña is another 17-year-old who jumps out of the promotions class to join the Overall Class category, so called the "big boys' race."

He will be paired with Irishman Greg Murphy (2004 Formula Rover champion) under the banner of last year's Team of the Year awardee, Ambi Pur Team Goddard-Minardi Team Asia.

Other teams

Completing this year's team roster include Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO bannering drivers Filipino Pepon Marave and British James Winslow.

Denso Hanjin JF3, on the other hand, will be represented by Japanese Katsuhiro Konno and Indonesian Moreno Soeprapto.

Tuason Racing Team banner will be carried by Filipino JP Tuason.

Peña summed up this year's driver composition as exciting, considering that more foreign drivers have joined to give local drivers ample challenge as well as giving one of the country's major motorsports event an international flavor.

Boosting popularity

To further boost AF3's popularity, Peña pointed out the race expanded format: 12 rounds from the previous 10.

This year's series of race will be held at the Sentul International Circuit in Indonesia and another two at the Zhuhai International Circuit in China.

"(AF3's) aim is to ensure that there is a structured path to the top for our Asian race drivers," said Peña. "I believe that along with our partners at the Asian Festival of Speed (who promote the Formula BMW Asia Series), we are giving our drivers the best possible opportunity to progress from Karts through Formula BMW and on to Formula 3," he said.

The AF3, with major sponsors including Addict Mobile, Motolite Battery, Boysen, Yokohama Tires, Lima City Hotel and PLDT MyDSL, has partnered with Studio 23 and The Filipino Channel to bring the race to more people.

Focus on Honda, Volvo and Grandis

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

GRANDIS

AUTHOR Oliver Sacks recently wrote an interesting commentary about the Honda Accord hybrid. It appeared in the New York Times on March 25, 2005. Read on:

"My new car performs as well or better than the previous one, but gives nearly double the mileage for a gallon of gas. Doing a rather average amount of driving in a year—20,000 or 30,000 miles—I find that I am saving 500 to 1,000 gallons of gas."

Sacks said he didn't mind paying a huge premium for his Accord Hybrid when he traded his old car for it.

Said Sacks: "True, I had to pay a premium for the car (about $3,300 more than the equivalent gas-only model), and my trunk space is a bit reduced, to make room for the battery. But I will make up the extra cost in gas savings in a year or two, I have the convenience of filling my tank only every 500 miles and, more important, I can now drive while enjoying the feeling that I am being economical with fuel and adding half as many pollutants to the atmosphere."

Before you get carried away—and I won't mind—the Accord hybrid is not really sold worldwide. Not yet. The vehicle is only being sold in America and selected parts of Europe.

As in most hybrids now on the road, Sacks' Accord hybrid is a picture of quietness.

Wrote Sacks: "I love the quietness of my hybrid in town, the way the main engine turns off whenever I come to a stop (and this is often in New York City traffic), and there is only the nearly silent electric motor ticking over. I love it when I climb a hill, or have to pass another car, and the electric motor kicks in to assist the gas engine, a bonus of power without any additional fuel demand. And, above all, I love it."

On another plane, Honda's Ridgeline also got a good review at the Washington Times Auto Weekend. The Ridgeline is Honda's pickup for 2006. It's that advanced.

Wrote Connie Keane: ". . . People who love the Accord are going to love the Ridgeline. One of the first things I noticed when turning on the ignition of the Ridgeline was how much it sounded like the Accord sedan. The Ridgeline does not have a 'trucky' sound, or a 'trucky' ride. The all-wheel-drive pickup is built on its own all-new designated platform."

She also wrote: "The Ridgeline's C-pillar does not open and fold flat to extend the length of the pickup bed. The Ridgeline's C-pillar is designed for aerodynamics, to keep the wind noise down at highway speeds. The Ridgeline may not appeal to traditional pickup-truck buyers, but I'm betting Honda will develop its own core of loyal pickup-truck buyers."

While it is now common knowledge that Honda has developed its own hybrid like the rest of the world's major players like Toyota, at least you also now know that Honda has built its own truck—Ridgeline—to challenge its major rivals in this vehicle category.

When will the Ridgeline, or its equivalent, be introduced here, only Arnel Doria knows.

Any news, *kabaleyan*?

* * *

I almost forgot. Here's a glass to Volvo S60 T5 for being chosen the best luxury sedan of the year by the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi).

In winning, the S60 T5 topped a tough field of competitors, besting the BMW 530D, Jaguar S-Type and Mercedes-Benz E-Class.

With its powerful 250 bhp 5-cylinder engine, it gave power and a thrilling performance to earn the nod of the judges.

Coupled with sleek design and luxurious comfort, the S60 T5 also edged its competitors in terms of pricing. The 2.3L powerhouse is priced at a very competitive P2.745 million, offering interested clients more value for their money. In a nutshell, the S60 T5 "is the most intelligent choice for sports sedan enthusiasts."

More than 50 cars underwent rigid assessment before the Volvo S60 T5 emerged winner in the tabulations conducted by Sycip, Gorres and Velayo.

In Manila, Viking Cars Inc. is the official distributor of Volvo cars. The Volvo Makati office, showroom and after-sales Service Center are located at 2272 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, while Volvo Ortigas Center is located at 88 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

The 2005 Volvo automobile line includes the all-new S40 compact sedan and V50 sportswagon, the sporty S60, the flagship S80 luxury sedan, the rugged Cross Country and the all-new XC90 AWD. You can 893-6621 to 22 or 637-0414 to 15 for more details.

* * *

The Grandis has been receiving grand reviews and I am not surprised. This latest Mitsubishi babe boasts of a dual MCC (manifold catalytic converter) that not only improves low-range performance by reducing exhaust pressure interference, but also significantly reduces exhaust emissions.

The dual construction enables the catalyst to warm up more quickly, increasing the engine's effectiveness. It boosts performance by letting gas flow more smoothly from the cylinder.

But if there's one big innovative aspect of the Grandis worth projecting here, not to mention its sleek design and futuristic features, it is its overall weight. It's been cut drastically by reducing the thickness of the flange plate connecting the MCC to the engine.

And how about this?

The Grandis has an engine immobilizer: When you turn the key, a unique ID chip communicates with the on-board computer to verify its identity. Any attempt to start the car without a registered key immobilizes the engine, preventing theft.

As usual, like in other Mitsubishi brands, Grandis buyers get a 3-year, 100,000-km warranty.

* * *

QUOTE ME. The key to a hassle-free ride at the Northern Luzon Expressway is to impose big fines to slow–moving vehicles occupying the wrong lane.

More rugged 2005 X-Trail

AUTHORIZED dealers of Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. will launch tomorrow the 2005 Nissan X-Trail, which will surely appeal to discriminate vehicle buyers who want authentic SUV performance with extreme looks to match.

Already a winner in many aspects including being selected as the Best Compact SUV in the prestigious 2004 Car of the Year Awards and C! Magazine's Best Compact SUV Choice in its 10 Best Cars Search, the Nissan X-Trail just got a major upgrade in the looks department.

Features

Added features include the Nissan-exclusive hyper roof rail, engine cover in ABS plastic and rugged 5-spoke alloy rims for the 250X. Standard features for all variants are the redesigned Euro-version chrome V-grille, glittering side lamps, rear European running lamps and baby fender mirrors. The 200X and the 4x2 get a sporty roof spoiler as standard.

The X-Trails still retain the efficient and lively QR series engines with "All-Mode Four Wheel Drive" system for applicable models. Used in the 4x4 variants, the system in Auto Mode features a "no-slip on start-ups" technology, which gives the X-Trail power on all four wheels when the accelerator pedal is depressed. The X-Trail's computer system does the disengaging of 4x4 when it is not needed. The advanced selectable all-wheel drive system was derived from the popular race-ready Skyline GTR, and gives the X-Trail its excellent onroad handling attributes.

Functional innovation

Said NMPI market and product planning manager Raymond Tribdino: "The X-Trail's platform is one of the most up-to-date among compact SUVs in the market anywhere. The changes we introduced to the X-Trail are designed to increase its visual desirability. But they are also functional, aside from making it look extremely good."

One example of the functional innovation is the Hyper Roof Rail, available only in the X-Trail 250X. It is a great driving aid in heavy fog or while cruising dark provincial roads. Providing as much 30 percent more forward illumination, the lamps have also been angled in such a way that drivers of vehicles from the opposing lane are not blinded nor distracted by glare.

Requested add-ons

"Our X-Trail market is very knowledgeable and many of these features we added actually came from suggestions of X-Trail buyers and owners," Tribdino said.

New to the X-Trail 250X are the five-spoke alloy rims with thicker sections, which gives it a very distinctive look from the X-Trail 200X and 200. "We chose these robust-looking wheels to complement the car's tall, full stance and the hyper roof rail," Tribdino explained.

One of the most requested add-ons is the baby fender mirror. This device is very valuable for tough off-road conditions, because it gives its driver a good view of the lower blind side (right side in left-hand drive cars). In more urban settings, the baby fender mirror helps in parking in tight spaces, traversing very narrow streets and reversing between obstacles.

The rear bumper-mounted Euro fog lamps increase the alertness of drivers from the rear.

Following the athletic and robust looks of the X-Trail's European cousins, the chrome V-grille gives it the look of the new "Nissan-ness," which is a unique and identifiable look similar to most Nissans worldwide.

RP motorheads lay groundwork . . .

From page B2-1

MARIA Antoinette Lee, former Mazda brand manager and now Ford's AVP for Asean brands, with her Mazda3 "baby"—Coty-P 2004's media choice

would encourage all carmakers to participate.

Eliminating uncertainties

"Campi could also clearly define the categories in order to eliminate uncertainties in judging. We also expect that the Coty group would provide detailed evaluations as to how they were able to come up with the respective winners of each category. It was only explained during the awarding ceremonies," he said.

Doria, for his part, hopes all models would be considered, regardless of the manufacturer's support in terms of issuing a test unit.

"It is sad to hear that some models did not make it to the finals because test units were not made available, although one of the 2004 Coty winners was not provided by the manufacturer," he said.

"Also, there should be a minimum number of units distributed in the Philippine market as qualification. In the era of free imports, it is not nice to see a model selling just a handful of units win a Coty award. On the whole, Coty is a step in the right direction for the auto industry as well as for motoring journalism," said Doria.

Tribdino said he hopes that Coty-P would come out with a pre-selection supplement in major newspapers and a post-award supplement to explain the proceedings.

Dy Buncio said he hopes Coty-P would consider breaking up the larger segment categories, such as the SUV category into small, mid-size, and full-size SUVs. He stressed that "this would give all manufacturers a chance to showcase their best models."

Lady driven?

From page B2-3

On the other end of the spectrum is my aunt who doubles as my favorite airplane mechanic. A few years ago, I visited their hangar and was drawn to one of the unclad engines of a Piper Chieftain that she was maintaining. The sight of the Lycoming engine's massive turbo and beautifully drawn and shaped piping (presumably rainbow glazed from intense heat as only titanium gets glazed) awed me. I immediately engaged my aunt regarding the strikingly attractive aerospace turbo.

Initially she seemed surprised that I vaguely knew what I was looking at and promptly proceeded to suggest I go for some formal mechanical education or training since I seemed to have the knack for it. An expert had just told an enthusiast to go to school. The proverbial shoe was on the other foot. In hindsight, in that short exchange with my aunt women had gotten back at men for years of mechanical and automotive chauvinism. The universe is better for that moment.

Lady driven?

CATCH MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

I HAVE a Sunday ritual of perusing the extensive classified ads sections of one of the competing broadsheets. In a cruel but necessary weekly reality check, I realize that the lengthy and droning hours that I spend working are not going to get me my 3BR, 4TB, 20CG (car garage) dream abode, anytime soon.

Neither is writing this column, in all razor-sharp honesty. You'd be cynical too if you realized your retirement would only become reality at the overripe age of 120. Forgive the tirade.

Waiting for new owners

By the end of breakfast, my despair is gratefully broken as the real estate section gives way to the odd-thousand plus second-hand cars that are in the market for the week. My sacrament of humiliation then turns to one of hope and longing. From the humble ex-taxicab looking for a new home to the lusty grey market super cars, each of these two to three line entries read like a litany of singles dating ads. There are lonely cars out there waiting for new owners.

These "unwanted" vehicle adverts come complete with shady histories and unbelievable claims of shameful outright fraud. For example; does a 1998 Corolla with only 8,000 km on the odometer sound like it is too good to be true? How about a supposedly tax-paid late nineties Bimmer costing less than a Picanto? Yet, we owe something to the automotive classifieds.

Unique language

The greatest credit to society of the classified ads is its own cryptographic language; the precursor to the annoying but effective "text" gibberish of the new millennium.

The unique language of the auto ads section has developed because of the necessity to be brief and yet purposely vague at the same time. They hook the potential buyer with the image of the ideal and the perfect because many think that the great second-hand automotive deal is still to be had. The jaded, like myself, take all of this with a Bonneville Salt Flat's amount of sodium chloride.

Most ambiguous description

This brings me to one of my largest pet peeves in life. What in heaven's name is the term "lady driven" supposed to imply? This is probably the most ambiguous and ill-thought-out description for an automobile in the classifieds.

Bear with me on this one, but the second-hand cars must as well say "Driven by a Left-Handed Obsessive Compulsive," or "Owner Likes Greco-Roman Wrestling and Long Walks on the Beach in the Moonlight." Any post-Neanderthal analysis of the phrase does not add up to distinctive positive or negative attributes for cars that are owned and driven around by women. The sex of the driver or car owner should not matter in the final analysis of a vehicle's sale.

Maybe it's the masculine misnomer that the fairer sex drives a lot slower and less aggressive than males. In this case, then the car must be in better shape and can command a slightly higher price, right? This belief is nothing but a load of unwashed oily shop rags.

I've driven against and with women who more than hold their own in the chaos of Philippine roads. Hard to believe that Maria Clara can dogfight with the best that Manila's jeepneys, tricycles and buses can offer? Few know that underneath the long skirt of the traditional *baro't saya* is a worn pair of Sparco Speedcat Nomex driving boots. Heck, even the two ladies on the Inquirer Motoring roster, Aida and Tessa, use the brake and accelerator pedal with more gusto than myself—and I used to rally. Conversely, I know men who couldn't drive in any sort of motivated fashion even if the balance of the universe was at stake.

Okay then, maybe an automobile described as lady driven should be avoided like the plague for fear that it never saw an oil change or the clutch is burnt out? This is confirmed by the fact that most of us will attest to the notion that women would not be able to differentiate between a torque wrench and a Torx screw. Well, neither can my 27-year-old brother (sorry bro) and he comes from a family where synthetic motor oil is supposed to run in our veins in lieu of the usual crimson stuff. It does not matter that the man does not have any sort of mechanical skill with cars, we still think of him fondly.

LADY/ B2-2

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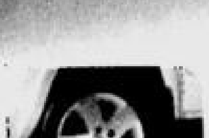
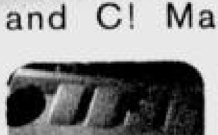

5-spoke Alloys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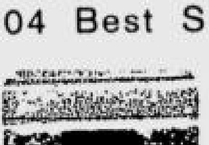
Chrome V-Grille


Euro Rear Lamp

Baby Fender Mirror

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Revealing figures

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IN ANY business, figures reveal a lot. Here are figures that give a snapshot of the automobile industry: 88,075 SOLD. In contrast with record highs in other Southeast Asian countries, Philippine new vehicle sales fell to 88.075 units in 2004, down by 4.84 percent from 92,336 in 2004. Auto sales figures from six other countries—Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam—show that the Philippines was the second smallest market after Vietnam, which sold 40,000 new vehicles last year.

Thailand, with 625,000, led the region, followed by Malaysia (488,000), Taiwan (484,000), Indonesia (483,000) and Singapore (110,000). Unlike the Philippines and Vietnam, auto sales in these countries rose in 2004 compared to 2003.

The stagnant Philippine car market is blamed on the government's failure to control the importation of used vehicles. The Land Transportation Organization reported that in 2004, first-time registrations of used cars increased by 20 percent to over 116,000 units. The Japan International Cooperation Agency estimates that used car imports cost around 20,000 units in lost new vehicle sales. Incidentally, Toyota is said to account for almost a third of overall sales volume and 47 percent of passenger car sales in the Philippines, which is the highest share of any passenger car market in the world.

1M more

Carlos Ghosn, the Renault executive who amazed the world by turning around the debt-ridden, nearly bankrupt Nissan Motor Co. to record profits in a span of three years (1999-2002), promised last May to increase Nissan's annual sales by one million vehicles to 3.6 million worldwide by Sept. 30, 2005.

Toward this goal, Nissan will launch six new models in Japan and revamp the Nissan Sentra, Frontier pickup and Pathfinder SUV in the United States before September.

19,500 km a year

Americans drive farther. In 2003, the average motor vehicle in the United States traveled 19,500 km, up by 5 percent from a decade earlier. (Over here, on the average, privately owned vehicles travel around 10,000 km a year.) The United States, where more than 16 million cars and trucks are sold every year, accounts for 25 percent of world oil consumption and nearly half of this goes to fueling its motor vehicles.

25% growth

Passenger car sales grew 25 percent to a record 802,788 in India last year while exports rose to a record 160,059 units. India sold 7.65 million cars, trucks and motorcycles in 2004 (more than half the total sold were motorcycles).

A Morgan Stanley study says that India, Asia's fourth biggest economy, may match China's current demand for cars in four years if its economy grows at 8 percent a year. Suzuki Motor makes half of the cars driven in India, while Hyundai Motor, which sold and exported 215,000 units last year, sells six models there.

19,500 KM A YEAR: The average traveled by cars in the United States in 2003

24M cars

Aside from low-cost Japanese and Korean cars, US and European car manufacturers will soon be facing a new threat: Chinese cars. Chinese automakers, led by Chery Automobile Co. and Brilliance Chinese Automotive Holdings Ltd., plan to start exporting their products to the United States and Europe by 2007 at the latest. Although Brilliance China has a joint venture with German luxury car manufacturer BMW to produce BMW 3-Series and 5-Series sedans in China, BMW says that it did not help Brilliance in developing the Zonghua M1 sedan which will be exported to Germany this September to compete with General Motors' Opel Vectra and Ford's Mondeo.

Chinese cars are cheaper because auto sector labor costs in China average 95 cents an hour compared with around $26 in the United States and $36 in Western Germany, according to the Center for Automotive Research. By the way, China is now the world's fourth largest car market after the United States, Japan and Germany with 24 million vehicles on the road.

Some 200,000 new cars are added to China's roads every month. But the car market in China is slowing down. Last year, 5.07 million cars were sold in China, a mere 15 percent increase over 2003 after surging at an annual rate of 35 percent or more over the previous years. In 2003, China overtook Japan as the world's second largest oil-consuming country after the United States. Eventually, China figures to overtake the United States in cars as it has already overtaken America in sales of refrigerators, mobile phones and TV sets.

34% drop in sales

Motoring media were given a sneak preview of the concept 2006 Honda Civic Si coupé at the Chicago Auto Show last February. The '06 Civic will start selling in the United States this fall. US sales of the current Civic fell 9.3 percent in January from a year earlier and plunged 34 percent in February 2005 compared to February 2004.

Since the Civic accounts for one-fifth of Honda's sales in the United States, where Honda Motor earns two-thirds of its overall profits, Honda hopes that the redesign will restore the Civic's market appeal, especially among young sport compact "tuners." Honda sold 309,000 Civics in the United States last year. The new Civic will be a big change from the current model, "sportier, and with a more emotional design," Honda's chief executive, Takeo Fukui, described it.

(With reports from Bloomberg News, The New York Times, AWSJ, The Detroit News and just-auto.com E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph))

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A politician should do two terms—one in office and one in jail.

Manila Motor Show starts April 28

WORLDBEX International is set for the Manila Motor Show this April 28-30, from 10 a.m. to 12 m.n. at The World Trade Center, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. The inaugural show, the first that will bear the Philippine capital's name, will coincide with the annual World Sport and Leisure Show. The two shows combined will attract sports and motoring enthusiasts throughout the country.

With the cooperation of local car manufacturers and distributors, 2005 model year vehicles will be displayed along with some upcoming future cars, special vehicles, classics and concept cars.

Home to major brands

The entire 2,500 square meter area of the World Trade Center will be home to all major brands including Audi, BMW, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Honda, Hummer, Hyundai, Isuzu, Jaguar, Kia, Land Rover, Mazda, Maserati, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Nissan (Universal Motors Corp.), Peugeot, Porsche, Ssyang Yong, Toyota and Volvo.

Welcoming the guests is a special display of all-category winners from the recently concluded Car of the Year Awards a project of the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi). The different Cagi members will serve as the official tri-media partners of The Manila Motor Show.

The Manila Motor Show will also give its visitors a chance to try these various models with special test drives as well as other activities including off-road demonstrations, quarter-mile challenges and various seminars on road safety and awareness. Special offers on new vehicle purchases as well as hourly raffles and other giveaways await all motoring enthusiasts.

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**
Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

Summer strokes for different folks, *Part 2*

Last week, we gave you summer guides for different personalities.
This week, we have more guides: fun ideas for couch potatoes, things to keep mallrats occupied, suggestions for a happy and gay summer and a directory of workshops that you can attend.
We also have stories on Avril Lavigne and Simple Plan's recent Manila visit, tips on caring for your skin and your hair this scorching season, clothes that will add a dash of color to your wardrobe and contests you can join.
This week, we also pay tribute to a great man, Pope John Paul II

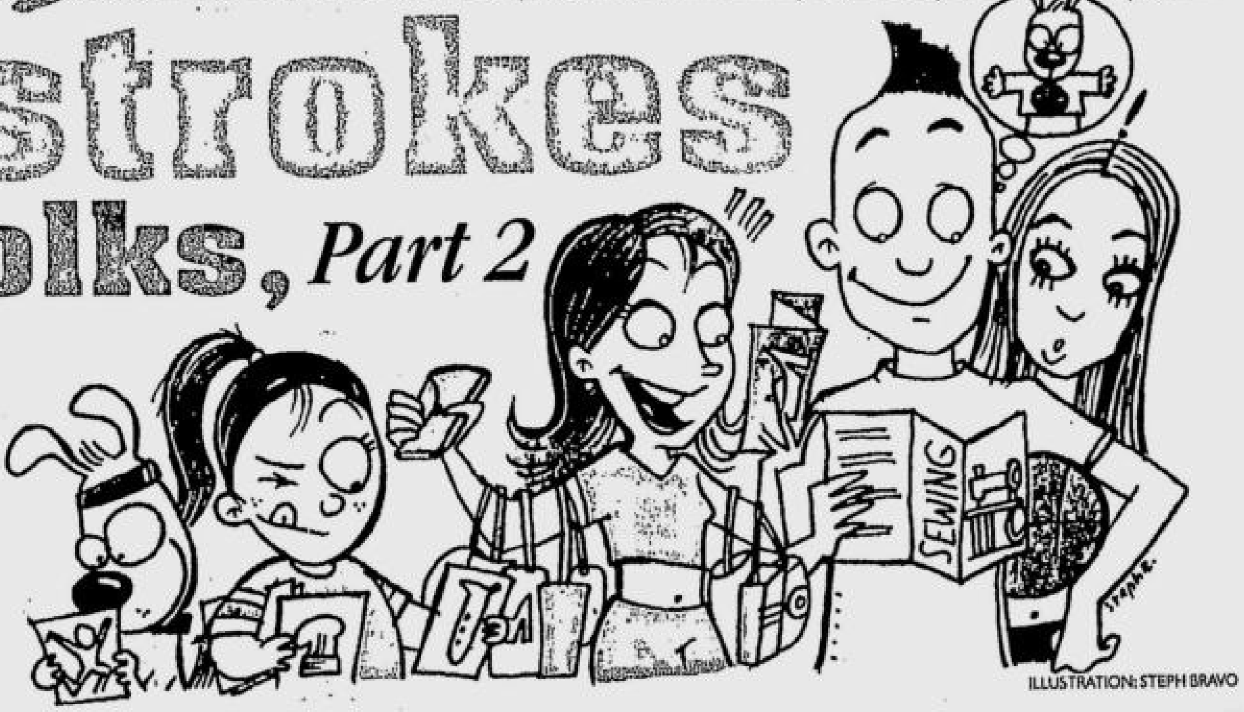

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Enhance your creativity

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

THIS SUMMER, shame the scorching sun with your inner fire for the arts! Remember, vacation time is no time to be a lazy daisy. So stretch those vocal chords, practice those dance moves and express your creativity. The following are a few workshops that will definitely reveal (or improve) the artist in you.

Ryan Cayabyab The Music Studio offers a pop vocal class for teenagers, aged 14 and above. Individual Voice and Piano Lessons are also offered. Call 8443330, 8432874 or 0917-9096484.

Join the Young Image Course for kids, teens and young adults aged 5-21. The first batch has already started but the second batch is scheduled on May 2-30. You can enroll by calling 7819861 or 2410042. They offer topics such as Personality Development, Fashion and Grooming, Effective Communication, Skin Care and Makeup, Basic and Advance Modeling and Acting for Film and Television. New courses are Conversational English, Ballet, Kids Aerobics, Ikebana, Ikenobo, Aqua Aerobics, Swimming, Table Tennis and First Aid Safety Training.

On April 9, 16 and 23, Basic Principles of Film Directing will be offered by The Filmmakers Multipurpose Cooperative at its office at ALTU Bldg., 77 Scout Tobias, South Triangle in Quezon City. Registration is from 2-6 p.m., Monday to Friday. Call 2875442.

Trumpets Playshop teaches modeling under Tweetie de Leon, public speaking under Kata Inocencio, basic fashion photography under Jason Tablante, animation under Roli Sabado, basic acting under Enchang Kaimo, musical theater under Audie Gemora and Jaime del Mundo, and streetdancing under the Manoeuvres. Enrollment is until April 16. Call 6362842, 6335010 or 6354478. Trumpets Playshop venues are at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Steps Dance Studio and Alabang Town Center.

Center for Pop Music now offers Starborne, the training program that honed the singing talents of singing superstars like Sarah Geronimo and Erik Santos. They have 18 branches in the country. Call their head office at 7239373, 7275293, 4117310 or 4135217.

Workshops@abs-cbn is now accepting enrollees for its summer courses. Courses available are Basic Acting, Basic Voice, Musical Theater, Streetdancing, Modern Jazz, Breakdancing, Modeling, Imaging and Talk Fun (Speech Class for Kids). First batch is from April 11-29 while second batch is from May 9-27. The workshoppers will be featured in a variety show as a graduation exercise. Call 4153826 or 4169366.

Mandy Navasero will hold an Advanced Photography Workshop for seven weeks starting April 9. Classes will be held every Saturday until May 21, 2-5 p.m. Her studio and office is at Room 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo), Barangay Bel-Air II, Makati City. Call 8991767 or 8963208; or e-mail mandy-navasero@photopro.com.ph

The Philippine Educational Theater Association will hold its annual Summer Theater Arts Workshop on April 11-May 7, at the UP Integrated School in Diliman, Quezon City. Offered are Teen Theater 1 for teens aged 13-17 years old, Basic Acting for adults and professionals, and Theater Arts 1 for teens aged 17 and above. Call 7249637 or 4100822, fax 7226911. You can also e-mail petaworkshop@petatheater.com

PowerBooks is loaded with several workshops this summer. Filstar Distributors Corp. teams up with Powerbooks in hosting a Scrapbook-making workshop on April 6, 13 and 20. Nautilus Comics holds a series of free workshops for all comic enthusiasts on April 15 and 30. Call 7576428 to 29 and 7288156.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

More workshops

By Happy David
2bU! Correspondent

Dance

Powerdance Studio (2/L Carpark, Shopwise, Cubao) opens its 11th Summer Dance Worksho on April 18-May 27.

Courses offered are Jazz (all levels), Junior and Adult Ballet, Hiphop, Ballroom and Powerhit/Dance-Aero. Special classes on Stott Pilates also offered.

Workshop fee is P8,000, which includes a recital. Call 9958287.

Summer Dance Intensive with Julie Alagde.

Fresh from "The Lion

ENHANCE/ C0

The long, hot, gay summer

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

SUMMER oozes with possibilities: meeting people, discovering destinations, learning, loving, living.

With a little more time on your well-moisturized hands, summer is the ultimate date for whatever. For all gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals, it's a hot time to support the community by being immersed in GLBT-related activities. When the sun is out and you feel as if there is nothing to do, consider the following good stuff to keep you preoccupied this summer.

Readables

Gay magazines are proliferating now! L magazine will give every gay man something to smile about.

Icon magazine is helpful and educational but not limited to gay men. All we need now is a magazine for the lesbian Pinay.

Writer-artist Oliver M. Pulumbarit has just released a graphic novel called "Lexx, Nancy & Argus: Sex, Gods, Rock and Roll." Eye-friendly drawings plus nod-inducing lines equals applause!

Go grab "Rolling the R's," a novel by R. Zamora Linmark. Set in a Hawaiian community in the '70s, it sheds new light on gay identity and the trauma of assimilation. It tackles realities of cultural confusion, prejudice and desire. And according to Jessica Hagedorn, the book explores "taboo sexuality and ethnic identity with refreshing candor and sly wit."

If poetry's your thing, grab a copy of Danton Remoto's "Pulotgata: The Love Poems." It is a collection of poetry in English and Filipino that's too lovely and not limited to the GLBT community.

Zsazsa Zaturnnah, the lovely hero of Carlo Vergara's comicbook "Ang Kagilagilalas na Pakikipagsapalaran Ni Zsazsa Zaturnnah," is a hit in bookstores. Filled with fab illustrations and quotable lines, the comic book is one fast and fulfilling read.

Jessica Zafra, an icon of gays and lesbians, believe it or not, comes up with another edition of her Twisted columns. "Twisted 7" is out now. Its design is so gay that the cover alone should make you part with your hard-earned cash.

Records

Check out "Want Two," the brilliant follow-up to the "Want One" album of the gay and great Rufus Wainwright. Exploring darker themes, Wainwright sings about his battle with drugs and the ever-present love.

Ladies and ladylikes, gentlemen and gentlegirls, get ready for Scissor Sisters, the hottest act in Great Britain. They sound great, they look fab, plus they're gay (most of them are)—definitely something to be happy about!

Who needs Barbra or Diana when we've got Mimi aka Mariah Carey? Reborn and refreshed, our favorite banshee is back with another album. Feeling freer and happier than ever, the new album called "The Misadventures of Mimi" oozes with happiness and positivity, no trace of ballads and tears and heartbreak in this album! Goodbye drama!

Movies

Before winning an Oscar for that punch flick with Clint Eastwood, Hillary Swank won her first trophy for "Boys Don't Cry," a powerful film about the true story of a transgendered woman who was raped and murdered after being exposed.

Starring Macaulay Culkin as the flamboyant Michael Alig, "Party Monster" traces Alig's friendships, romantic relationships and series of parties that drove everyone nuts. It also tackles the murder that sent him to the bars. Fun costumes and rah rah-rah performances from everyone!

"Sex and the City" is probably more straight than gay, but the clothes worn by the foursome are enough for the series to be gay. Purchase the whole series and rate the clothes. For gay and lesbian nights, watch the episodes where Samantha gets it on with a lesbian artist, argues with her tranny neighbors or where Stanford kisses the queen doll collector. You can also probe Cynthia Nixon's performances now that she has separated from the father of her kids and has a lesbian lover.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu @yahoo.com

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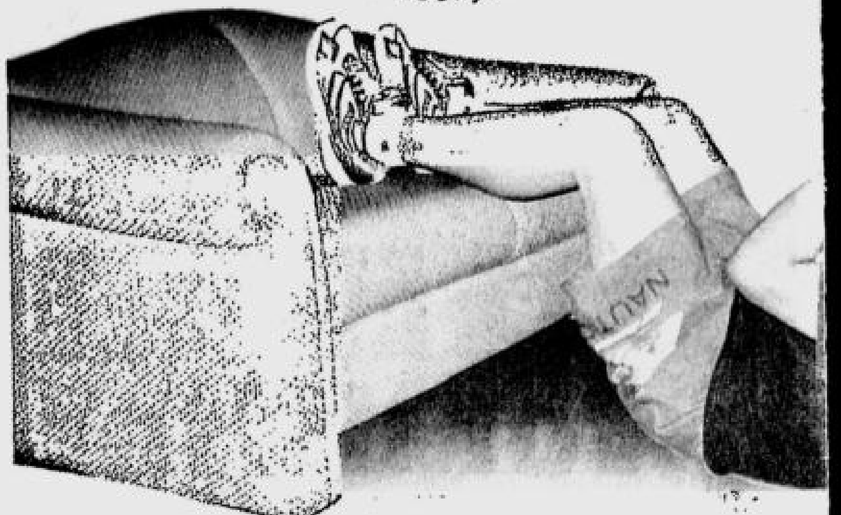
Couch variety

Yes, even couch potatoes can have great summers



ANTI-POTATO look? "Always think in your head, you have to flex."

By Tammy David
2bUI Correspondent
Photos by Macky Katigbak

COUCH potatoes of the world, unite! Summer has finally arrived. Objective: To have the best summer. Destination: Couch…eh?

Seriously for those who actually plan to spend two months in front of the TV, shame on you! But for those under "house arrest" (read as grounded) or who think they deserve a relaxing summer at home after an exhausting 10 months, here's a guide to have a "well-rounded" summer as a sofa spud/home body.

Just always remember to start the day by taking a shower and that there is life outside your couch potato domain.

TV tray staples

Books. It's never too late to start the "52 books a year" quota, but then again your book reading may be interrupted by precious "American Idol" nights or long naps. Try reading at least a book or two this summer. Start with the classics or the best sellers lying around the house. Here are some suggestions mostly collections of essays and light reads like chick lit.

'Purpose Driven Life'
By Rick Warren, P175

For the love of your parents and *ninangs*, please pick up one of the copies you received over the holidays. It only takes one chapter a day for 40 days. Who knows by the end of the summer, you will know your purpose in life besides sitting in front on the couch.

'The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Difference'
By Malcolm Gladwell, P379

'Me Talk Pretty One Day'
By David Sedaris, P375

'Alamat ng Gubat'
By Bob Ong, P100

'He's Just Not That Into You: The No-Excuses Truth to Understanding Guys'
By Greg Behrendt and Liz Tuccillo, P499 (paperback)

'True Philippine Ghost Stories'
Edited by Reginald Ting, P80 per book (8 books)

'Man Overboard: Essays by, for, and of the Smart Filipino Male'
By Butch Dalisay, P350

'Fast Food Fiction: Short Stories to Go'
Edited by Noelle Q. De Jesus, P180

'Sleepless in Manila: Funny essays, etc. on insomnia by insomniacs'
Edited by Cristina Pantoja Hidalgo

'Young Pens for Young Minds: Anthology of Selected Essays, 2000-2004'
P275

'No Boyfriend Since Birth'
By Claire Betita, P150

All books available at Powerbooks and National Bookstore. Check out powerbooks.com.ph

Snacks. Rule of the summer when it comes to snacks? Absolutely low fat and no soda!

Holy Kettle Corn!

Supposedly "Great Diet Food" popcorn with "No butter! No cholesterol! No MSG! No preservatives! No artificial flavors!"

Holy indeed.

Small Bag is P25, Big Bag is P60. Stalls are located in Ayala Alabang Town Center, Amethyst Drive behind Residencia, Harrison Plaza and Starmall Las Pinas

My Goodness: Foods that nourish

Snacks that make bodies healthy! Made from ingredients like whole wheat flour, oats and organic mascobado sugar. Available munchies are Gopalabars and wonder browns.

Call 823445 or visit www.mygoodness.com

Chimara

Makers of some of the best healthy munchies in town, try their Tofu chips and NeoNachos (light weight P50, heavy weight P80, special size 250g, P150) Other products offered are Olive Popcorn, Ban Apple Chips and flat bread sandwiches.

Located at 4/L, Greenbelt 3 Makati City. Visit www.tatersgroup.com/chimara.htm

C2 Green Tea

Here's a good substitution for soda. Available in peach, apple and lemon, and of course, just plain green tea.

TV Guide

Clickthecity recommends:

"Darna"
Premieres April 4 on GMA 7

"Perfect Moments"
Premieres April 3 on ABS-CBN 2

"The West Side Story"
Premieres April 3 on the Lifestyle Network

"Arrested Development" (Season 1)
Premiering April 14 on Star World.
Thursday at 9:30 p.m.;
Friday at 1 a.m., 3 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

"The Simple Life" (Season 2)
Beginning April 14 on Star World
Thursday at 9 p.m.; Friday at 12:30 a.m., 3:30 a.m. and 12 noon; and Sunday at 2 p.m.

"Le Divorce"
April 10 at 9 p.m. on Star Movies, with repeats on April 19 at 9 p.m., 20 at 10 a.m., 29 at 7 p.m., and 30 at 3:45 a.m.

"Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World"
April 24 at 9 p.m. on Star Movies

"Magic Kitchen"
April 16 at 9 p.m. on Star Chinese Movies, with repeats on April 24 and 28

"American Idol" (Season 4)
Wednesday at 4 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.; Thursday at 2:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 4 p.m., 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.; Friday at 2:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.; and on April 8 at 3 a.m. on Star World.

For more information, check www.clickthecity.com.

Check entertainment schedules via SMS. Type CTC and send to 2333 (Globe) and 225 (Smart).

DIVINE snack: Holy Kettle Corn

Other summer tube faves

"TNA Wrestling" on Star World
Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 1:30 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

"The Apprentice" (Season 2)
Wednesday at 10 p.m.

"Interpol Investigates" on National Geographic
Wednesday at 12 m.n.

"Lost" on AXN
Thursday at 9 p.m.

DVD/VCD player feed: Catch up with movies you missed out during the school year. Organize marathons at home like Asian Fright nights or late '90s "chick flicks."

Here are some VCD titles spotted at Music One, Tower Records, Astrovision and National Bookstore

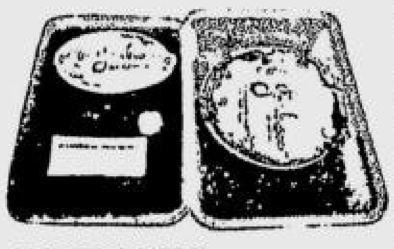
P275
Anchorman, The Terminal, The Bourne Supremacy, White Chicks, Collateral, The Manchurian Candidate, The House of the Flying Daggers, Kung Fu Hustle, Bridget Jones's Diary: Edge of Reason, Mean Girls, Crying Ladies, Imelda.

P250
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Wimbeldon, American Splendor, The Notebook, The Prince and Me, A Cinderella Story, Before Sunset

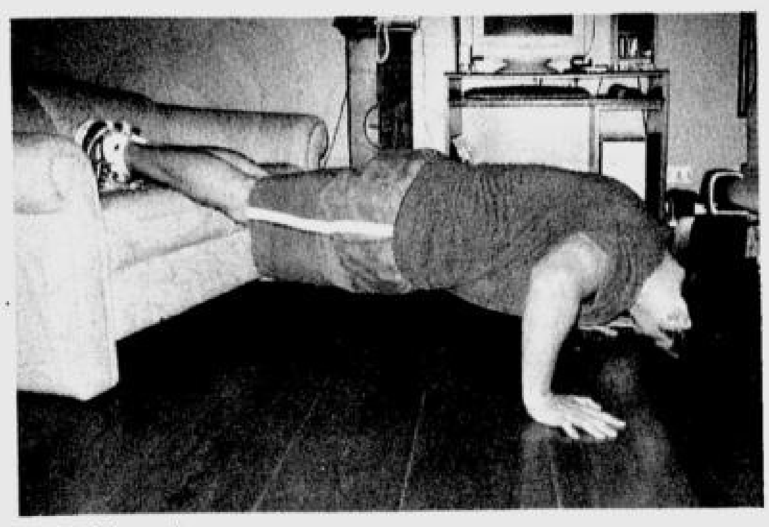
P295
Mano Po 3 and Aishite Masu

P99
Singles, Training Day, Dave, Ocean's Eleven (1960)

P75
Sky of Love, Center Stage, Dracula, Election, The Craft, Once Upon a Time in Mexico, Blue Crush, Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey, Carrie, Platoon



MY GOODNESS!



COUCH exercises

NO DUMBBELLS? Use phonebooks and yearbooks!

Couch potato workout

Try shedding a couple of pounds to avoid the round-potato image.

1. Easy Exercises

Cardio

You will need an exercise machine unless you can do laps or jog 15 km inside your room. Bring exercise machines inside the room, den or any place where favorite TV is. Exercise machines should have heart monitors. Heart monitors can be purchased separately and used for other exercises such as jogging, swimming and other sports. For couch potatoes, the recommended machine is the bike with the steel wheels. (Like the Power Bike SPC-4000 Protelis. Around 17-20k Available at Toby's)

Another important thing is to get a TV show you're happy with. "Alias" and "24" are perfect since they run for forty minutes and at the same time, adrenaline pumping. Whenever stuff gets exciting on TV, remember to tighten the resistance on your exercise machine.

Shows with hot chicks and guys help too since they motivate you.

Do exercise on the bike for 20 minutes six times a week or 45 minutes three times a week. While doing exercise, stand up while doing pedals for a minute or two till heart rate rises.

Stretching

Jack Knife: Grab back of the chair. Balance on your backside on the edge of your couch. Then slowly lift legs like a jack knife or a clamshell phone. Focus on tightening stomach (for abs). Always exhale on rest.

Crunches: Put legs on the couch with back flat on the floor. Inhale the way in while exhale on rest.

Push-ups: Feet on the couch. Exhale on the push, inhale on the rest.

Lift-ups or Curl-ups: If to the front, slowly lift dumbbells with palms facing up. To the side, palms should up facing down when lifting. Always think in your head you have to flex.

Weights/Dumbbells alternatives: Yellowpages, yearbook, 4-lb pineapple juice cans.

2. Exercise videos

Working Out with Jackie Lou Blanco, P150

Carmen Electra's Aerobic Striptease (volumes 1-5), P150 each volume for VCD

Exotic Belly-dancing by Andrea Del Rosario and Regine Tolentino, P250

Daisy Fuentes: Totally Fit Workout, P150

Basic Elements: My Complete Fitness Guide by Anna Kournikova, P150

Perfectly Fit Lower Body Workout by Claudia Schiffer, P150

Cindy Kurleto's Sensual Aerobics, P199

International Ballroom Dancing Instructional Video by Ednah Ledesma, P275

For those who want to take a break from a sedentary summer, here are some ideas:

Clean your room

It's the number one preferred activity of school breaks but only few succeed in achieving this summer goal. As usual, start with sorting out clutter, clearing out closets then arranging stuff from CDs to shoes.

Garage sale

After cleaning your room, your trash can be somebody else's gold. Remember to give fair prices especially if the items are beyond mint condition.

Learn to cook on your own

Though house cooks and 8mcdo.com are God's gifts to couch potatoes, why not learn to cook a dish to save up on home deliveries next time? You can also finally apply the stuff you picked up from the cooking shows you watched on Sundays.

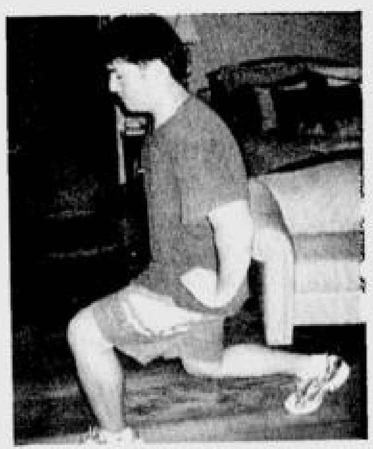
Get more ideas from:

"Forever Summer" by Nigella Lawson, P1689

"The Little Merienda Book" by Gene Gonzalez, P95

"Appetite Magazine" (Mega publications), P85

"Easy Everyday Meals from the



DO LUNGES during commercial breaks

Enhance your creativity

From page C1

King" performances in Sydney, Australia, Alagde will hold classes April 4-May 27 at Steps (Karrivin Plaza 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati).

Classes include Intermediate Advance Horton (Modern Dance); Intermediate Advance Jazz, and Conditioning, Strengthening and Stretching.

Fee is at P7,000, inclusive of therabands for conditioning

E-mail Julie_alagde@yahoo.com.au or text 0916-2472154.

Steps Dance Studio. Classes include Ballet, Jazz, Street-Dance Tap, Flamenco, Salsa and Yoga.

Fees range from P2,800 to P3,900 monthly. Additional P3,800 for recital fee.

Steps is at Karrivin Plaza 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati. Call 7572984 or 8438472.

Drama

Tanghalang Pilipino, the resident theater company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, offers the following workshops:

Teen Theater. Introduction to performance skills for 12- to 16-year-olds. The workshop integrates creative drama, music, writing, movement and visual arts. Script analysis, stage makeup and voice for theater are also incorporated.

Fee is P5,000. Workshop to be held at Silangan Hall on April 12-May 14. Instructors are Mailes Kanapi and Catherine Racsag

Musical Theater for 12- to 16-year-olds. Singing, movement and acting are synthesized to prepare participants in musical theater productions. A musical recital caps the workshop. Fee is P5,500. To be held at Bulwagang Amado Hernandez, April 12-May 14. Roy Rolloda and Marisse Borlaza are instructors.

Musical theater for 17 years old and above. A musical recital caps the workshop. Fee is P5,500. Workshop at Bulwagang Amado Hernandez on April 12-May 21. Instructors are Roeder Camañag and Nazer Salcedo

Beginning acting for 17 years old and above. The course will teach the rudiments of acting, body and voice preparation for creating character, and effective stage work. Fee is P5,000. To be held at the multi-purpose hall on April 12-May 21. Instructors are Tess Jamias and Cheryl Ramos

Call 832-3661 or 832-1125 loc 1620/1621.

GET THOSE feet ready for ballet.

Visual arts

At the Ayala Museum, art workshops are regularly held. Courses offered are Introduction to Drawing, Watercolor, Oil Painting, Sculpture, Acrylics, Basic Chinese Painting, Painting Landscape, Still Life and Indian Folk Painting

Ayala Museum is at Greenbelt 4, Makati Avenue and Legaspi St., Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 7577117 or 7573588.

MAKE SURE they don't burst. Learn the basics of balloon arrangement.

Entrepreneurship

The Department of Trade and Industry offers several entrepreneurship courses, such as:

How to be an Entrepreneur, The Importance and Value of Business Plan, How to Start a Business, Franchising Opportunities for Small- and Medium-Scale Enterprises, Basic Marketing and Selling Techniques, and Fashion Merchandising.

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How to have fun in a mall

By Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

BE IT FOR real shopping, window-shopping or just simply cooling down, we all know that the mall is the best summer destination in the urban jungle. There are a lot of things you can do in a mall. But true blue mallrats know that these activities usually mean spending a whole lot of moolah. Uh-oh. Summer = no allowance.

Don't fret. 2bU! comes to your rescue by coming up with tips to surviving hanging out at the mall even if you have little money in your pockets.

Food trip

Go for drink-and-eat-all-you-can promos. Don't be shy and load up. You're paying for it anyway. I remember back in high school when my classmates and I would do our group projects at Burger King mainly for their onion rings and drink-all-you-can sodas and juices. Word of caution, go easy on the eat-all-you-can promos or worse, eat-all-you-*kanins*. We don't want flabby tummies, do we?

Taste test. Some products hold promotional activities like taste-testing in supermarkets. It's a good way of tasting the product before buying it. Don't go overboard, though. It's just a taste test, not an entire meal for free.

For people who enjoy staying forever at cafés, get the bottomless drinks if they have any. For coffeeholics, try something new and go for hot teas instead. Did you know that you can actually have your cup refilled with hot water? I once spent an entire afternoon sipping hot tea while consuming pastries and reading a good book. Tip: Buy a bottle of mineral water. Most restaurants and cafés have drinking fountains; just make sure the water you're refilling in your bottle is distilled water.

Have an ice-capade. I'm sure there's at least one soft serve ice cream machine in the mall (try the food court). For below P10, you can easily overcome the summer heat. Plus going for a second serving won't be too heavy on your pocket. You can also try the *samalamigs*. They're cheap and truly thirst-quenching. Just make sure they don't use magic sugar.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Sound trip

Chill out at your favorite record bar. Get your fill of the latest tunes and kill some time by hanging out at the listening stations. This is also a good chance to check out the tracks in the CD before you buy them. Spending P500 on CD with just one good song is not a good idea.

If singing out loud is more of your thing, head to the nearest arcade. Exchange loose change for some tokens and belt out your favorite songs in the karaoke machine. Not only is this a money saver but it expands your audience as well. Who knows, this could be your lucky break into making it in the music industry. Note: Do not, as in do not, even attempt this if you know your voice resembles the sound of screeching tires.

Go into concert mode

Try watching a mall show for once. Dozens and dozens of artists do mall shows every week. So bring your camera and prepare your CD cover to be signed. Bring your own permanent marker, too. Just make sure you check out the mall schedule first or better yet, cut out the 2bU! summer mall events guide. You can also check with the mall management to confirm the schedule. Watch out, you may be gearing up to have your "Dramachine" CD signed not by Ebe and the rest of Sugarfree but by Eddie Gil, Madam Auring and the cast of "Pelukang Itim"!

Barkada trip

Prepare to shout "Bingo!" and share the prize money with the rest of the *barkada*. Bring fun into a roomful of *manongs* and *manangs*. I bet they will find it refreshing to have some young people mixing in with their crowd. But before you line up for Bingo cards, make sure you and the gang are 18 or above. Bring an ID with your birth date to prove it. Don't waste all of your money here. Just get one card each. If one of you wins, split the prize. If none of you did, don't kill yourselves. Enjoy the game and the company of your friends. Do it for fun not for the money and most of all, don't turn this into a career.

Gift giving without the buying: Go inside a store, pick out gifts and show them to each other. Go for wacky and fun items. Tell each other crazy reasons why you picked those items. Take note of what your friends want. Make a mental note to get it for them on their birthdays or for Christmas. My friends and I love hanging out at the greeting card sections of bookstores and department stores. We pick out greeting cards we want to give each other. We'd have a blast by choosing cards that don't apply to us like "Mother's Day," "Father's Day" and even "Happy Grandparent's Day" cards. Pay for the items that you're actually buying and make sure you put the one that you don't need back to where you got them. We're suggesting good clean fun, people. Shoplifting is a crime and causing trouble is never a pretty sight.

Solo trip

Hang out at the bookstore. Check out the bestsellers and the new releases. Find out if the book your classmates were talking about last semester is really a good read. Some bookstores offer comfy reading areas where their customers can read. Browse through some magazines for the latest in fashion. List down the titles of the books that you like and buy them when you have the money.

Get a makeover. Try some makeup at the makeup counter. Play with the testers. Again, keep in mind the items that you like. Ask for some makeup advice from the people behind the counter. Be nice to them and come back. Some salespeople are very nice and if you're also nice to them, they can score you some samples.

Try on a new scent. Give your nose a workout. Test the newest perfumes in the market. What smells good on your classmate may not smell as good on you. Know the difference between a parfum and a eau de toilette. Always be nice to salespersons and buy some things from them next time.

Being cash-strapped doesn't automatically equate to being fun-strapped. The key to having fun on a budget is practical spending. The mall is your friend, not your enemy. It shouldn't rob you of your money.

E-mail the author at s_a_l_e_e_m_a@yahoo.com

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Nuggets of advice for mallrats

By Saleema Devi Refran
2bU! Correspondent

WHILE we gave you tips on how to survive hanging out at the mall with little money, we also advise you not to abuse them. Here are some things to keep in mind before hitting the malls this summer.

Never go to an eat-all-you-can or drink-all-you-can place if you plan to fill a jug with soda and a plastic container with food for *baon*. Yes, you are paying for the food but it doesn't mean you have the entire buffet table to yourself.

Be conscious of the space you occupy. If you plan to chill out at a place for some time, make sure you order enough for the afternoon. Once in a while, buy a drink or a dessert. The food on your table is your ticket to staying there. If you see people looking for a table and you're already finished with your food, take it as a sign. It's about time you leave.

"To taste" is different from "to eat." This is the reason why most taste test products have a toothpick or are contained in little cups. While such promo activities aim to have their products tasted by the market, you are not its only market.

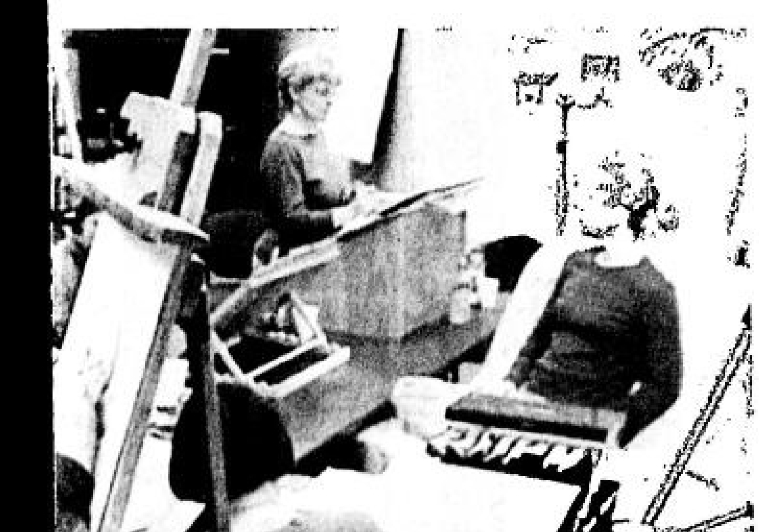
Don't you hate it when salesgirls are *masungit* when you ask them for something? Well, they hate *masungit* customers, too. Remember that respect begets respect. Be nice to the people who attend to you. Bug the salesperson only when you actually intend to buy their products. I personally hate people trying on clothes and shoes with no intentions of buying at all. If you love the dress, go ahead and try it on but make it a point to come back for that item when you have the money. Salespeople are keen on remembering both nice and mean customers.

Be polite to everyone. Use those magic words. Say "thank you" to the guard who opens the resto door for you. Say "no, thanks" to offers, don't just push them away. If you always go to a certain establishment, make it a point to remember the names of the people serving you. Those nameplates where placed there for a reason. Address them via their names, not "Hoy," "Psst" or "Pogi." Also, remember to give tips if the service is really good.

Girls, don't treat public restrooms as if you own them. Give way to people who want to wash their hands or check how they look.

Boys, don't make the listening stations of record bars your home. Give other people the chance to listen to their songs as well. If you really love the album, buy it.

The general rule is never go overboard. Always keep in mind that there are other people in the mall. While you have the right to enjoy your day at the mall, they have the right to enjoy theirs as well.



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TLRC is at 8/F, CityState Centre Bldg., 709 Shaw Blvd. (near Rizal Provincial Capitol Compound), Pasig City. Call 6373712, 6335709 or 6336728.

Fashion

For those interested in fashion, they may try to take up special courses at the Fashion Institute of the Philippines at 910 Cityland Shaw Tower, Shaw Blvd, Mandaluyong.

Instructors include Shanon Pamaong and Paris-trained designer John Herrera.

Courses available are Basic Fashion Design on April 14-May 190, Basic Pattern Making on April 13-May 18 and Basic Sewing (individual schedule).

Fee is P8,000. Call 6355383.

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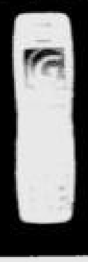

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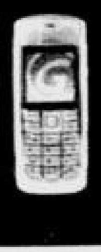

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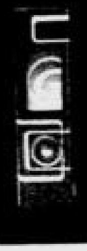

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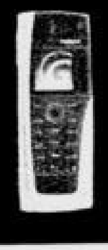

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Goodbye, Pope John Paul II

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

I CRIED when I heard the Pope died. (And I'm sure many of you did, too.)

I remember his visit here years ago, when we elementary school students were made to memorize the World Youth Day song, "Tell the World of His Love." A glimpse of him in the "pope mobile" was enough for me. I remember his face on a keychain I had, with his eyes crinkled and his fingers raised in a peace sign. I remember reading his book, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope," in high school and being so thankful later that I did.

He was probably the most beloved Pontiff who ever lived, and the most historic as well—the first non-Italian Pope, the first to visit a mosque, the first to visit Africa, the most traveled, the first to record a music album . . . He even used the Internet to reach out to the youth, and apologized on behalf of the Church for past misdeeds. He helped bring down Eastern European communism. In him, the Catholic world found a dynamic leader who gave faith a new light. He would have been 85 years old on May 18.

It feels a bit strange to grieve like this for someone I have never met. Distant relatives have passed away and barely triggered any emotion, yet I only had to tune in to CNN for the tears to start flowing again. It is striking how the whole world, not just Catholics, could grieve over a man who stood for so many things in his decades-old term.

Even though we knew he was old and that it was probably his time, his passing is still tragic simply because it was another light of goodness extinguished.

Another benevolent soul that touched the earth, and under whose guidance we were privileged to be, is gone. Evil people seem to live forever, but the good ones have an expiration date. And like all good people, the Pope's death, no matter how expected, still seemed too soon.

Even after a new pope leader is elected, John Paul II's life will be remembered and replayed. It will remind all of us that it is possible for one soul to make such a difference.

Goodbye and thank you, John Paul.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

> The Catholic world found a dynamic leader in the Pontiff who gave their faith a new light

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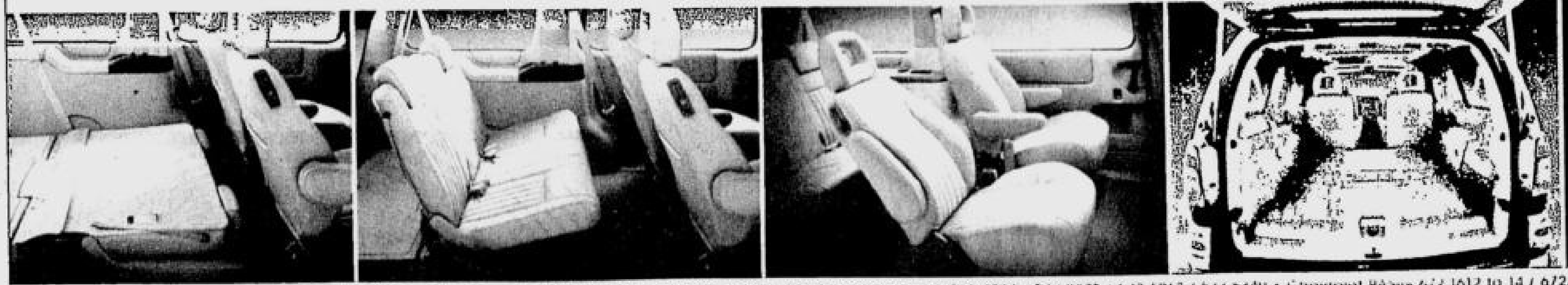

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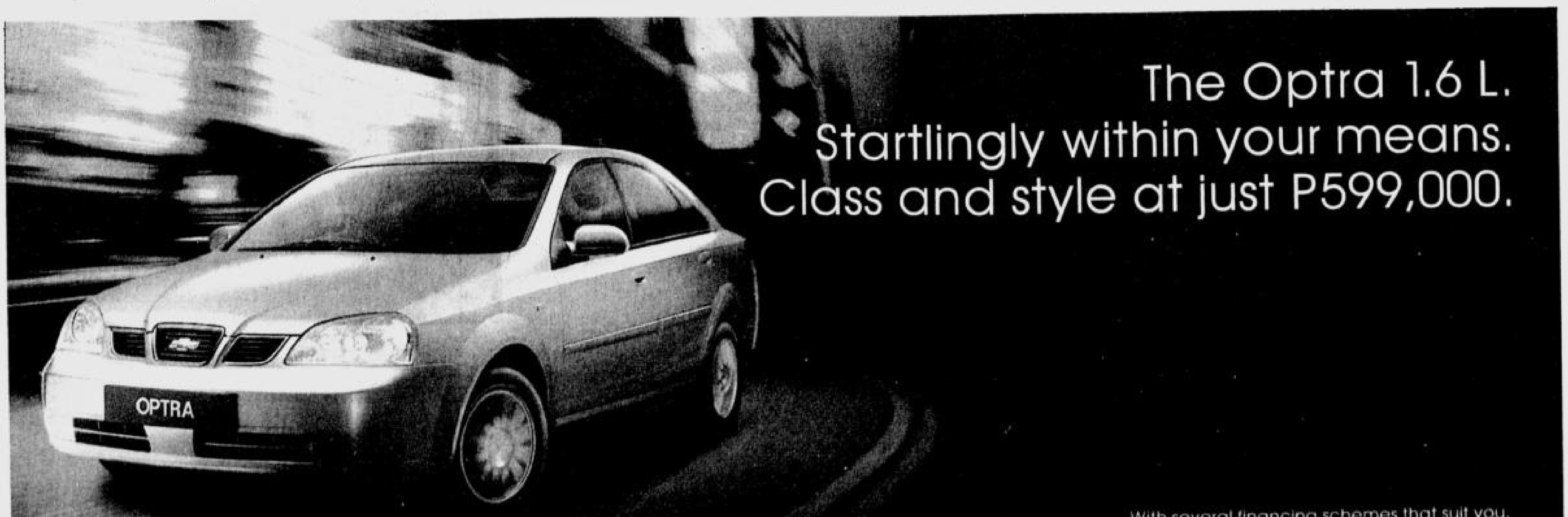

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Two Marks and Avril Lavigne

The Canadian punk rocker delivers a dutiful concert without frills and warmth

Under Avril Lavigne's skin

By Mark Bonifacio
2bU! Correspondent

"I AM who I am," Avril Lavigne said.

Whether you like her or not, nothing can stop Canadian punk-rock sensation Avril Lavigne from being herself.

Lavigne, whose debut album "Let Go" spawned hits like "Complicated," "Sk8ter Boi" and "I'm With You," recently visited Manila as part of her Bonez Tour, which took her to countries such as Japan, Australia and Singapore. She was also here to promote her sophomore album, "Under My Skin," which features popular tracks like "Don't Tell Me," "My Happy Ending," "Nobody's Home" and "He Wasn't." Lavigne took time to meet the press at the Oriental Suite of the Mandarin Oriental Manila hours before her concert.

I was warned just before the interview that Avril Lavigne would not be just an ordinary subject. Though the interview was shorter than the time originally allotted, 2bU! was able to know more about the punk-rock sensation despite the restrictions and her mood that day.

Why Bonez Tour?

"It's called that because I thought it is funny at that time and I'm regretting it right now," Lavigne said. "Bones... under my skin? Get it? Also, I used a lot of cross bones in my (album) artwork."

Unlike in her previous album where she worked with The Matrix, Lavigne decided to concentrate on writing her own songs and collaborate with new producers like Butch Walker (of the Marvelous 3), Don Gilmore (Linkin Park, Pearl Jam) and Raine Maida (Our Lady Peace). But she considers working with fellow Canadian singer Chantal Kreviazuk special.

"Chantal plays a lot of piano and because of that, we ended up using the piano as a writing tool," Lavigne said. "I ended up putting piano in my new songs."

Their writing sessions led not just to producing six songs ("Together," "How Does It Feel," "Forgotten," "Who Knows," "He Wasn't," "Slipped Away"), but also friendships. Lavigne considers "My Happy Ending" as her best song in the album and "He Wasn't" and "Slipped Away" (which she dedicated to her late grandfather) as the most personal cuts.

Breakaway

She usually writes songs when she is on tour, using a guitar or piano. Lavigne co-wrote the recent worldwide hit, "Breakaway," sung by Kelly Clarkson and which was included in the soundtrack of "Princess Diaries 2."

"I wasn't feeling the song and I just didn't want to sing it," Lavigne said when asked why she didn't include it in the album.

She has also yet to see "Princess Diaries 2." Lavigne doesn't have plans of writing for other artists in the future.

"I'm focusing more on writing for myself," Lavigne said.

Is Avril's life "Complicated"?

"No, not right now," Lavigne said.

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AVRIL in Manila

Loving Lavigne

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN the so-called pop-rock punk princess arrived in the Philippines, she snubbed airport personnel and fans. For a pop star who doesn't really smile in her pictures, that should've been expected.

What's unforgivable is how Avril Lavigne's bodyguards shoved fans away, including INQUIRER photographer Rudy Esperas, who got a six-inch gash on the arm, thanks to the bodyguard's Incredible Hulk arm with matching wristwatch. Oh, and the poor fotog dropped his expensive filter, too.

So imagine my ambivalence when I was honored with a meet-and-greet pass. Part of me was like a giddy grade schooler, but a bigger part of me was like the school outcast who was bullied by the campus jerk into surrendering his lunch money. I was excited and nervous at the same time.

Hours before the start of the Bonez Tour concert of the Canadian singer, fans in neckties and with skateboards had surrounded the venue. With my meet-and-greet ID pass, I was the object of everyone's envy.

Because of the Incredible Bodyguard incident at the airport, I was shaking, having been aware that whenever I get starstruck even with the littlest of stars, I turn crazy and obsessive.

On my way to the little tent that housed the blonde singing star who resembled Shandi of "America's Next Top Model," together with fellow fortunate greeters, organizers warned that Avril wouldn't sign autographs and that we couldn't take pictures with her.

Once inside, the staff ordered us to pose for a group picture, and fast. Not wanting to be just an extra in a group photo op, I elbowed my way to situate myself side by side with Avril and upon accomplishing it, smiled the mother of all smiles. After two shots, we were whisked out.

And then the concert started.

On time

According to the tickets and posters, Avril Lavigne's Bonez Tour 2005 Live in Taguig! would start at 8 p.m. Miraculously, the concert began as early as 8:20 p.m. Pretty impressive for an internationally-acclaimed act who I guess understood Filipino time. Actually, it was the Simple Plan band that appeared to play onstage at 8:20 p.m., but Avril fans didn't mind. It even seemed like everyone was digging the band's set.

It was 10 minutes before 10 p.m. when scary organ music announced the start of Avril's performance.

Everyone familiar with the rocker's music knew "He Wasn't" would be the opening song.

Screams filled the field when spotlights revealed Avril wearing a headband with devil horns. Strangely, it looked perfect on little Lavigne.

For a little over an hour, the fans were treated to an exciting night of music. Catchy and can-relate-to ditties from the debut album "Let Go" were dished out such as "Losing Grip" and "Sk8er Boi" and other equally appealing tracks like "Mobile," "Tomorrow" and "Things I'll Never Say." Songs culled from the sophomore success were also performed like "My Happy Ending," "Don't Tell Me," and "Nobody's Home." In fact, I think Avril played a little too much stuff from the "Under My Skin" album.

Whenever she played second album tracks, the audience either fell silent or sat down on their Monobloc chairs. I have two theories. One is that most of the audience did not have the second album and thus were unfamiliar with the songs. Another is that the songs were just plain bad that people couldn't get themselves to memorize and sing along to the music. Whatever the reason, the audience forgave and forgot whenever Avril spat out the more popular singles.

Disappointed

I have always believed that "I'm With You" is one of the best songs of the 20-year-old Canadian. Its melody is catchy, and listeners can relate emotionally with the lyrics. The song is sad, hopeful and heartbreakingly beautiful. My companion and I went to the concert anticipating Avril's performance of the song and we ended up disappointed when she finally sang it. The sad, hopeful and heartbreakingly beautiful song ended up as one of those songs that artists perform when they're tired and want to catch their breath.

And since we're on the topic of breath, let me bring up how powerful Lavigne's lung power is. The concert, which featured 20 songs and lasted for a little over an hour, showed how high and unfaltering Avril's voice is. She may not sing ballads like Christina Aguilera or belt out versions of songs "American Idol" features, but there is no denying that Avril can sing. During the concert, Lavigne rarely took breaks and just sang song after song after song. If you throw your musical prejudice into the waste basket and listen to her albums, you might realize that Avril does know her vocal gymnastics.

One disappointment for the audience was that her usual ogle-worthy band members were not around. Taking their places were less young and less-cute musicians who were nevertheless appreciated, audio-wise, by the audience.

PI

Highlights of the concert were Avril's comment on the weather, her piano-playing skills and collaboration with Simple Plan for a version of Blur's "Song 2," wherein she passionately banged on the drums. And unlike in Mariah and Norah's concerts, Avril didn't share her stage with cockroaches, mosquitoes or any other insect.

After performing "Complicated," the hit song that catapulted her to worldwide fame, Avril didn't return onstage for an encore. Why else should she do an encore, right?

Complicated is definitely one term that is not related to the concert. It pretty much started on time. There were no technical glitches. There was no drama. There were no fireworks or confetti or hypnotic visual computer graphics on screen. There were no "Kamusta kayo?" or "Salamat" or "Mahal ko kayo" applause-inducing lines from Avril. It was simply a musical performance that highlighted her melodies and wails. Personally, it was also a concert that brought back the ghost of angst goddess and Avrils' fellow Canadian, Alanis Morissette.

The Avril Lavigne Bonez Tour 2005 Live in Taguig! with Simple Plan was presented by Globe. Thanks to Mark Christian Parlade of Stratworks and Carmina Velayo, GenTxt brand manager.

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SIMPLE PLAN

A huge ball of energy

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

SIMPLE Plan was advertised as the front act for Avril Lavigne's Bonez Tour 2005 Live in Taguig!, but after the whole concert of both acts, it's clear to see that it was a back-to-back gig that drew in both Lavigne and Simple Plan fans.

Quite expectedly, the band, called an "EMO" band (for "emotional"), performed its monster hits like "Addicted" and "Welcome to My World." It was undeniable that the band was a huge ball of energy that effortlessly connected with the impressed audience. The band blurted out practiced lines such as "Holy moly, you guys are sexy," or "What a pleasant surprise," and they were still lovable, even if everyone knew such lines are thrown in every country where the band goes to. Favorite lines of the audience are "Hottest girls are from the Philippines," and "We will be coming back," which everyone wanted to believe.

The gig made fans love the band even more. Avril fans who were non-fans of the band became converts.

Meet and Greet with the act was more positive as opposed to the one with Avril. There were less bodyguards and the atmosphere seemed lighter. Band members were warm and they practiced common courtesy. Most important, there was an autograph signing. Pity the band though because all they had to sign on were posters of the Avril Lavigne Bonez Tour 2005. The friendliest was drummer Chuck Comeau while the band member with the thickest pentel pen was Pierre Bouvier, who does lead vocals.

It was David Desrosiers though, who plays bass and provides backing vocals for Simple Plan, who stole the spotlight from the rest of the band. Not only did he facilitate a challenging do-as-I-say singing segment with the audience, he also shamed Damon Albarn when he covered Blur's "Song 2," with a drum-playing Avril in the background.

Played last by the band was the "national anthem," "Perfect," which brought forth waving hands, well-lit cell phones and vocal participation from the audience. Of course, after that, everyone knew there wouldn't be an encore. All the fans could do was to hope in the band's promise of returning to our shores.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

Making great things possible for music fans

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

THE AVRIL Lavigne Bonez Tour 2005 Live in Taguig! with Simple Plan was recently presented to the Philippines by Globe at the Bonifacio Global City Open Field in Taguig.

In line with the gig, Globe cooked up several treats for music fans in the country. Not only did GenTxters get 20-percent discount on the P400 concert tickets or 20-percent discount for P3,000 and P1,500 tickets purchased at Ticketworld, lucky members also got the chance to meet and greet Avril Lavigne and Simple Plan backstage. They simply downloaded ringtones and ringbacks from the featured acts. One extremely God-loved being downloaded an Avril ringtone once and instantly won a backstage pass to rub elbows with the pop rock princess and the super band.

Globe also grants GenTxt members with 20-percent discounts on Avril's "Under My Skin" Special Edition CD when they pay in cash and 40-percent off if they pay via Globe GCash. What's even greater is that the promotion is ongoing until April 17 at Odyssey.

The concert marked a very special occasion in Globe's history. According to GenTxt brand manager Carmina Velayo, the concert is also a celebration of the fact that GenTxt officially now has a million members. And who is that one millionth member? He is Reinard Ignacio, and his name is featured on the GenTxt membership card presented in the latest television advertisement for Globe's Powerlink.

Packed with fun and features, Powerlink is sure to be another very beneficial and irresistible offering from Globe. Even the commercial is already garnering laughter and applause from viewers for its humor and fabulous choreography.

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"BLOCKED!" action at the ninth Nestea Beach Volley

"GREAT underarm sis"

Hot beach volley action in Boracay

Text and photos by JR Victorio
2bU! Correspondent

WHAT do Luis Manzano, Rissa Samson, Nicolette Bell and Brent Javier have in common? They are now busy perfecting their sculpted bodies for the hottest and most exciting event this summer. And it's happening in the sizzling place to be—the sandy shores of Boracay.

The essence of fun, excitement and spirited athletic competition will be showcased once more in the season's most anticipated sports event—the Nestea Beach Volley 2005.

Now on its ninth year, this most-talked-about event every summer draws beach volley enthusiasts from all over the country for beach volley fun, friends and feat. Touted as summer's most anticipated sports spectacle, the Nestea Beach Volley 2005 brings together the best beach volley players in the country for a chance to hone their skills, compete with the country's best collegiate teams and promote greater awareness of the sport. And to add more sizzle to the event are celebrities and music icons from Bamboo to the wacky duo Ariel and Maverick.

"The continued and overwhelming success of the previous games continues to inspire us to hold the Nestea Beach Volley each year," says Nestea brand manager Tina Samaco. "This being our ninth year, we're very thrilled to present a grander event. What makes this year's competition even more exciting is the fact that the level of play being displayed by the participants continues to reach exceptional levels. We're pretty confident that fans of the sport and the public in general will thoroughly enjoy this year's competition, as they always do each year," adds Samaco.

All roads led to La Salle Greenhills in Ortigas as the elimination rounds were held on April 1-3 for the Luzon teams. It's April 5-7 for the Visayas and Mindanao teams. Viewers can expect the hottest beach volley action as 72 teams from a total of 44 colleges and universities nationwide battle it out for the right to compete in Boracay and achieve beach volley glory. For the first time, Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines will join the volley battle of schools together with Colegio de San Juan de Letran, San Sebastian College and San Jose Recoletos.

Throughout the elimination rounds, viewers can also enjoy the mini fair booths located at the venue, watch fun games and participate in other exciting activities. Of course, lots of refreshing Nestea iced tea products can be sampled to quench one's thirst. To make the event sizzle some more, celebrities, models and famous local bands will be gracing all beach events. Have fun and joke around with MYX VJ Luis Manzano and the comic duo Ariel and Maverick. Strut your best bikinis and board shorts with models Corey Willis, Raya Mananquil, Rissa Samson and Brent Javier.

Beach volley action and excitement intensify further in Boracay on May 5-7, where the competition moves into the semifinal and championship rounds. Aside from spirited competitions, fans and players alike can raise the roof in a number of fantastic parties slated in Boracay's spanking hotspots like Hey Jude, Pier One, Aria, Bom Bom and Summer Place.

One of the highlights of this year's Nestea Beach Volley is the Beach Cleanup Drive scheduled on May 8, which is a testament to Nestea's strong sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, a portion of proceeds from the sales of the mini fair, including that of Nestea iced tea during the games, will benefit Bantay Kalikasan, a media-based project supported by a multi-sectoral network of government agencies, private organizations and non-government organizations.

"Nestlé, maker of Nestea, the Philippines' leading iced tea brand, is committed to taking part in environmental causes. The Beach Cleanup Drive is just one of the many ways we ensure the preservation of natural resources. We share Bantay Kalikasan's vision for a responsibly protected and preserved Philippine environment where future generations of Filipinos can lead a better quality of life," says Nestlé vice president and group product manager for beverages, Eugene David.

Summer's indeed shaping up to be another season to remember courtesy of the Nestea Beach Volley 2005. Intense beach volley competition from the nation's top collegiate teams set against the backdrop of idyllic Boracay truly make it an event to watch and enjoy year after year.

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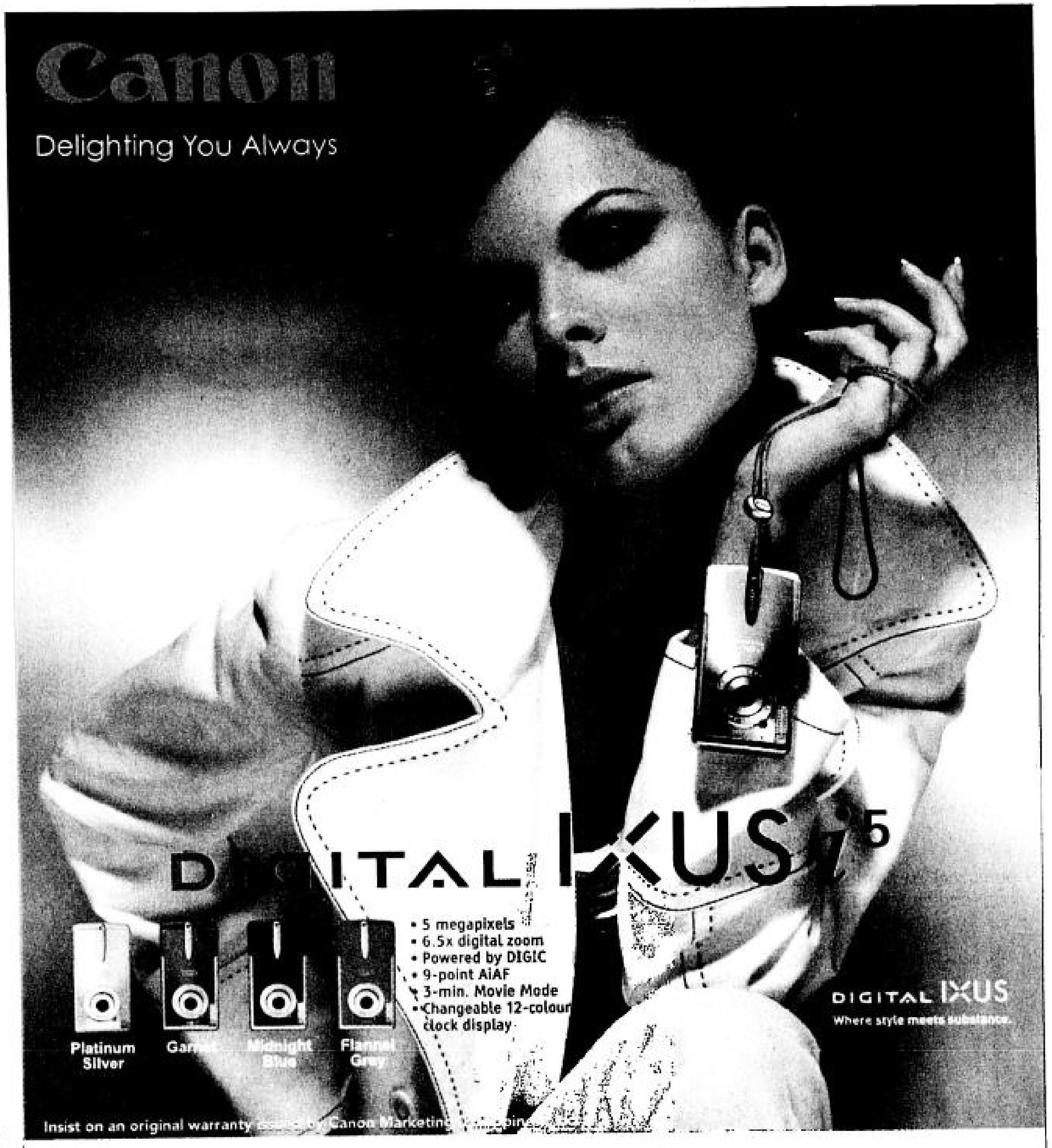

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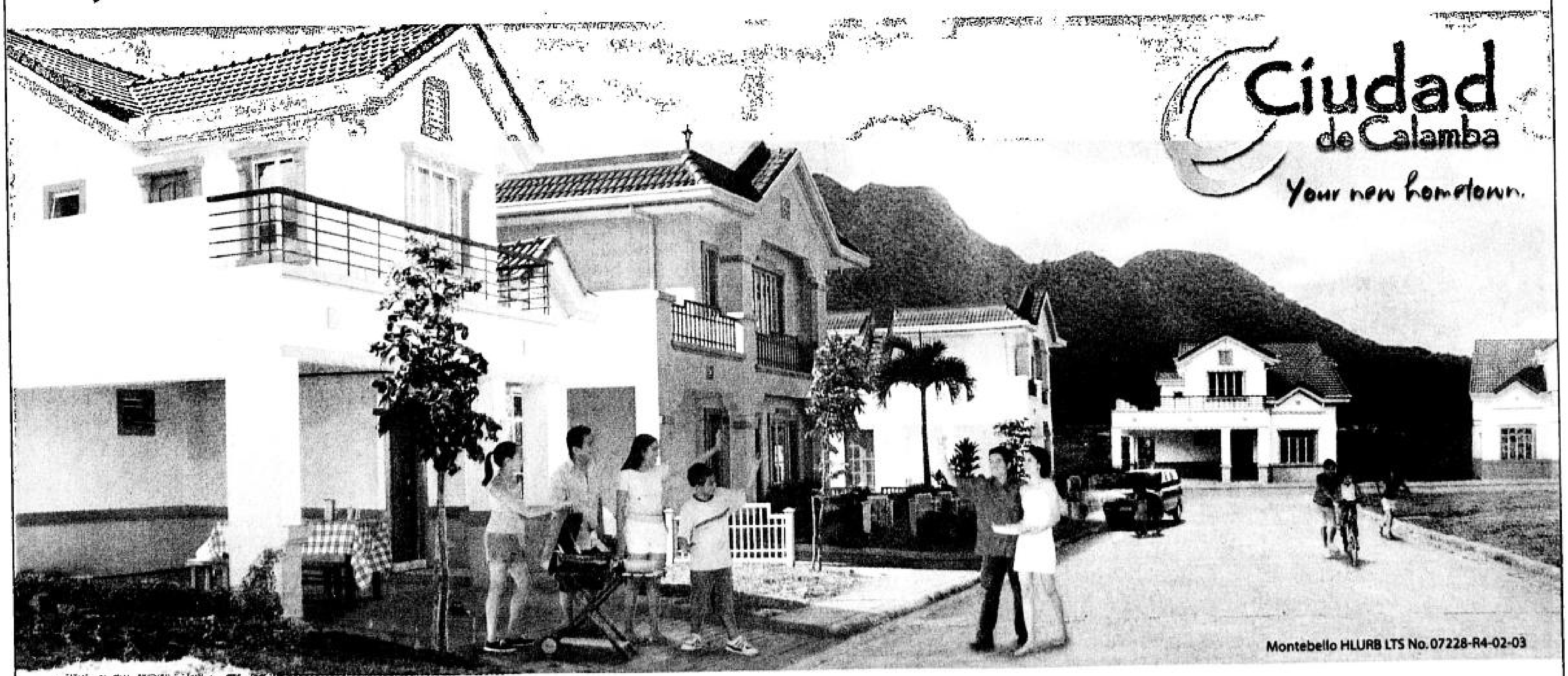

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MOURNING the loss of the true icon.

Pope culture

Tim Yap

WHAT is happening to our icons?

I know it is such an overused term, attached randomly to people, used up by corporate brands to pay tribute to whomever they deem appropriate for their logos and a status coveted by many wannabes. The real meaning though, just like the film, gets lost in translation. Icon, or iconoclast, is someone who goes against the flow, and yet, is still followed, condemned, or admired.

Just last week, the Pope died and **Nora Aunor** got arrested for possession of shabu. People from all walks and beliefs expressed their sorrow about his passing. Even non-Catholics and atheists mourned in silence, realizing that this man's hand shaped how we see religion and the world today.

Whereas other people would have given up and modified their stand on issues such as euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality, among other stuff that this liberated world insists on pushing, he was unwavering and uncompromising in his beliefs. He upheld the traditional teachings—he was the staunchest gatekeeper of the Catholic faith.

Didn't mean to put the Pope and the Superstar in one breath, but since I do not really tune in to CNN and the news, I learned about both incidents over the weekend, over a cup of hot chocolate at Max Brenner's.

I didn't expect the Pope to leave this world a week after Easter Sunday. I was out and about Saturday night, on my usual club hop around town. Again, since I do not watch television, I base my knowledge of current events on what people in the "outside world" talk about. The only outsider that I heard from was "insider" Fr. **Tito Caluag**, who told me during the commercial break of the TV youth forum show, "Y Speak" (now on Studio 23, Sundays at 7 p.m.) that after years of holding Mass, it felt so different for him not to say "and **John Paul** our Pope" during the Eucharistic celebration—instead he just continued with "and our bishop, and our clergy."

Reel and real

It felt different for me too. Not that I am a devout Catholic (because I'm not) because the world that I moved around in didn't seem to care about what happened. The bigger news on Saturday night was the Superstar in the States with illegal substances. Now, these two are icons of entirely different scales. They brought people together, the former using faith, while the latter using limelight. John Paul sprinkled Holy Water, *Ate* Guy used to sell water. Nora Aunor was reel, the Pope was real.

I asked some people how they felt about the situation and what I got was—what's the word? Apathy. "It's irrelevant and archaic," another writer, who did an informal survey on his own circle of friends observed. But how can someone who has affected the whole world not be relevant?

That same night of his passing, people were partying in Boracay for **Hed Kandi**. In Manila, there was a Fashion Week model's night at Embassy. In Bora, when news of his death spread around the island, photographer **Victor Consunji** overheard someone tell his friend, "Oh my, the Pope is dead." To which the inebriated soul responded, "Yeah, party on, dude!"

True icon

"I would have slapped the guy. I felt really disappointed when I heard that," said INQUIRER Super! columnist **Tals Diaz**. Well, this world has its fair share of people who don't care a hoot about things—whether it be the war in Iraq, a terrorist bombing or **Kris Aquino**'s love life. Have we become a self-absorbed generation merely focused on gloss that we fail to recognize the contributions of great people not just in our society but also the world in general? Or has Catholicism been that detached from the "real world" that it fails to address the needs of people now?

"I was overwhelmed by a deep silent sadness upon hearing other young people's reactions—or indifference to the Pope's passing, because it comes to light, that despite all his efforts and example, some people don't care about unless their lives are directly affected. They should be reminded that we are part of a whole," said young filmmaker **Katrina Holigores**.

"I was 6 years old when the Pope was crowned. I feel sad about it because I remember it so vividly—and he has ruled over the faith for a majority of my life," said my friend **Tina Tinio**, who perhaps summed up how most young people feel about what happened.

While we are still a predominantly Catholic nation, and many are grieving his loss, a good number feel that the Church is an outdated institution. "Okay, a great man died. Tribute, tribute, then let's move on." Others even went to the extent of calling him a bigot and a misogynist. Such is the fate of greatness. Condemnation, criticism or crucifixion? Jesus suffered the same fate.

My memory of him was when World Youth Day was held in Manila and I was a student volunteer from De La Salle University. I was with thousands of young people from all over the world. Everyone lined up to have something blessed by the Pope. "Hand in hand, we stand. All across the land, we can make this world a better place to live…"

We sung the theme song of World Youth Day with the Pope at the center of all the action. It was a different kind of high, another kind of rave—with a wave of his hand, tears fell from my cheeks. How many people can move you to tears of joy without even touching you? He exuded a certain sense of serenity that I have never encountered in my life. His Pope mobile passed, and you could feel his presence. You could feel that God truly exists.

Now, that's a true icon.

E-mail me at supertim@pldtdsl.net

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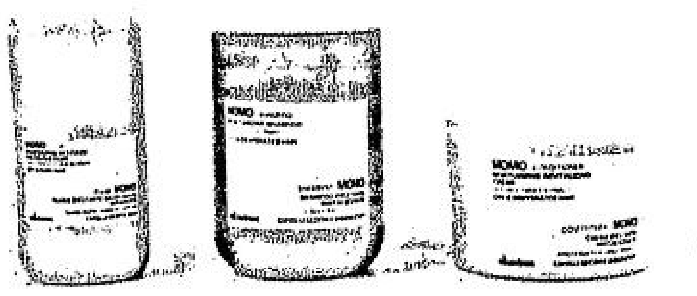
MOMO line of products from Davines

PHOTOS: OCS ALVAREZ

Maintaining heathy hair

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

SO YOU'VE packed the SPF 70 to keep your skin safe during your trip to the beach. But what about your hair?

There's no excuse to allow your hair to fry. Just like your skin, your locks need treatment and protection, too. We searched for some of the best products to make your hair look its best this summer despite the sun, sand and saltwater that could damage it.

Shampoos

Prolonged exposure to the sun can lead to dry, damaged hair. While this can be fixed with a good conditioner, it is also a good idea to get a little help from your shampoo, as well. Avoid shampoos that give you an overly "clean" feeling—that "squeaky clean" sensation is actually the result of chemical-based products that strip your hair of its natural oils. They could be damaging your hair instead of cleaning it.

Try Schwarzkopf Repair shampoo with aloe vera extract that promises to return elasticity to curly or permed hair, and Davines Momo shampoo, a moisturizing shampoo (hence "Momo") that contains sweet almond protein to lift dehydrated, dull hair.

If grease and not dryness is your problem (which often happens to people who put too much gunk on their hair, especially guys), then try Schwarzkopf for Men Vitalising or Anti-Grease shampoos.

Conditioners

If you've been skipping conditioner because it makes your hair feel hot, then you're headed down the express lane to hair damage. Switch conditioners for the summer if you think what you're currently using is too heavy—there are lots of lightweight formulas that offer deep conditioning despite their lighter texture.

Try Davines Momo conditioner with jojoba oil and bull thistle for dull hair, and Schwarzkopf Color Seal treatment and mousse conditioner, which are perfect for girls who want to prevent their hair from being lightened by the sun.

Leave-on conditioners

More often than not, regular conditioners are insufficient for the dry weather—although your scalp may feel greasy at times, you may still not be getting enough moisture for your hair. Instead of piling on the conditioner in the bath, opt for leave-on conditioners that provide extra vitamins and aren't as heavy as rinse-off conditioners.

Try Bed Head Health Goddess, a spray-on conditioner with Vitamins, A, B, C and E that smells like fruit punch, Schwarzkopf Moisture conditioner with aloe vera, and either Davines Momo Fluid or Cream—the first contains grapefruit and is ideal for frizzy hair, while the cream contains walnut extract and jojoba oil for extra dry hair.

Styling products

Go for hair products that don't melt at the

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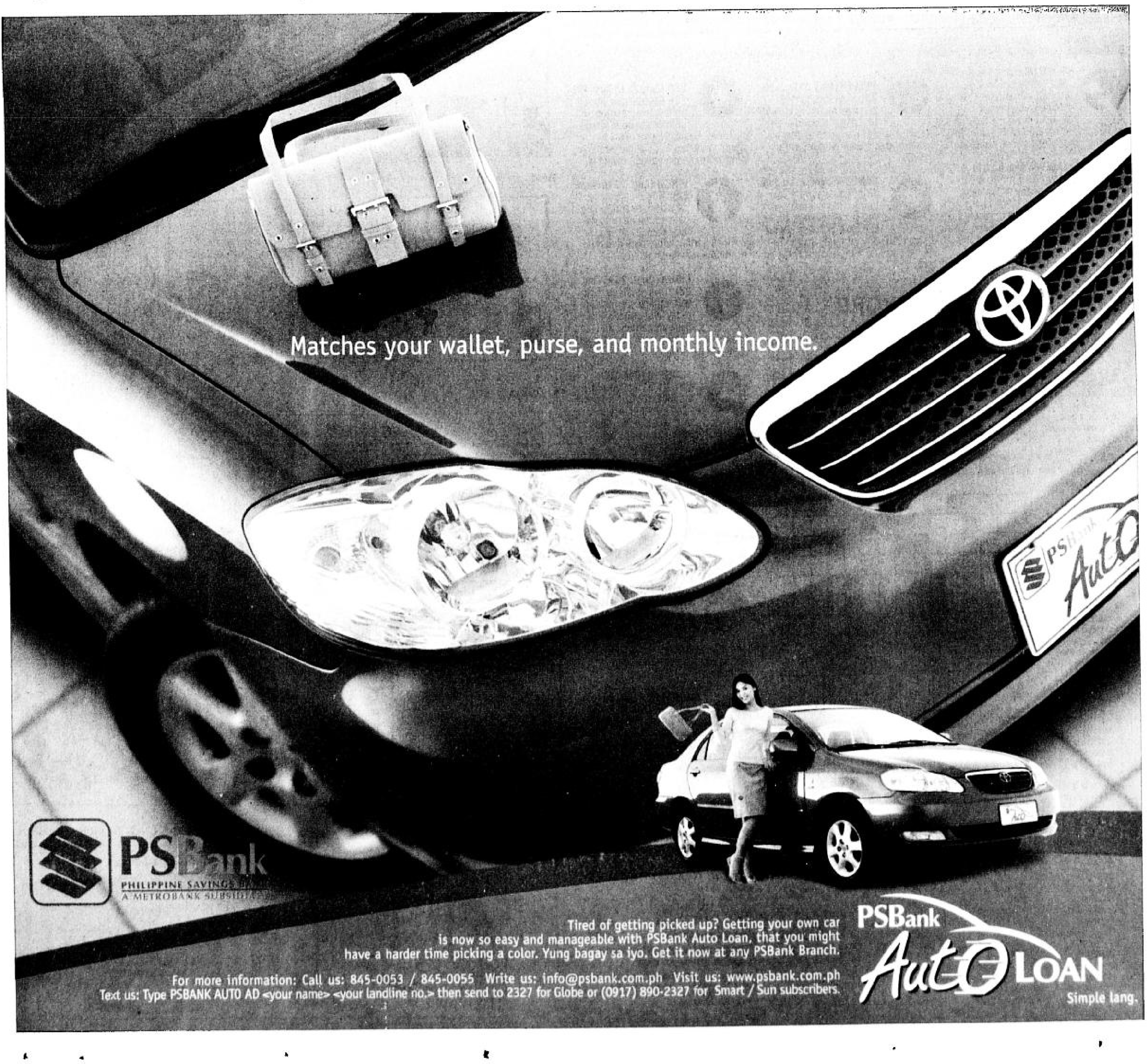
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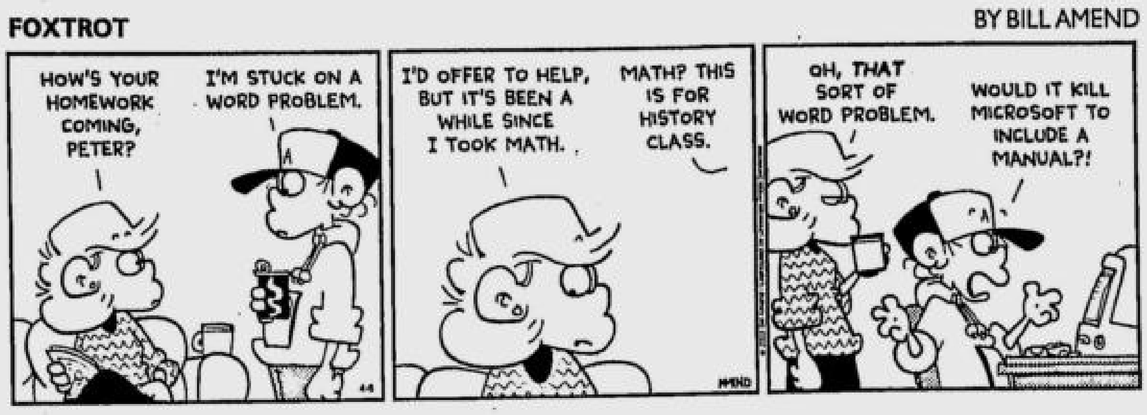
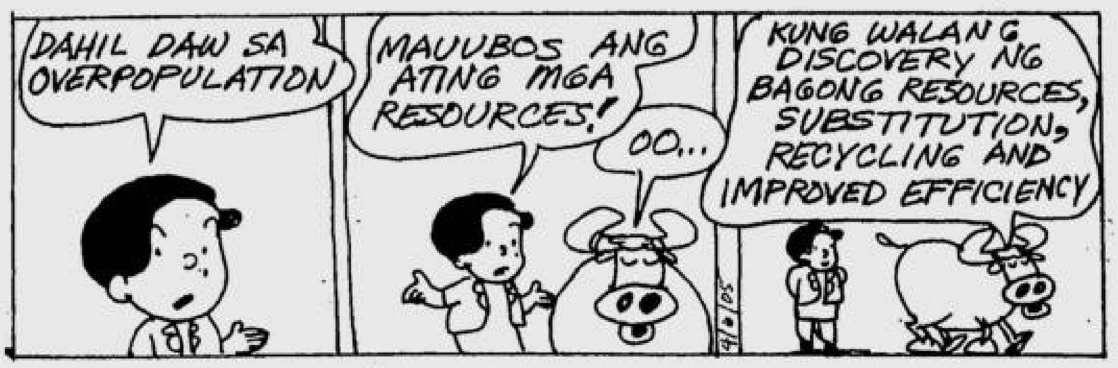
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HOW'S YOUR HOMEWORK COMING, PETER?
I'M STUCK ON A WORD PROBLEM.
I'D OFFER TO HELP, BUT IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I TOOK MATH.
MATH? THIS IS FOR HISTORY CLASS.
OH, THAT SORT OF WORD PROBLEM.
WOULD IT KILL MICROSOFT TO INCLUDE A MANUAL?!
AMEND

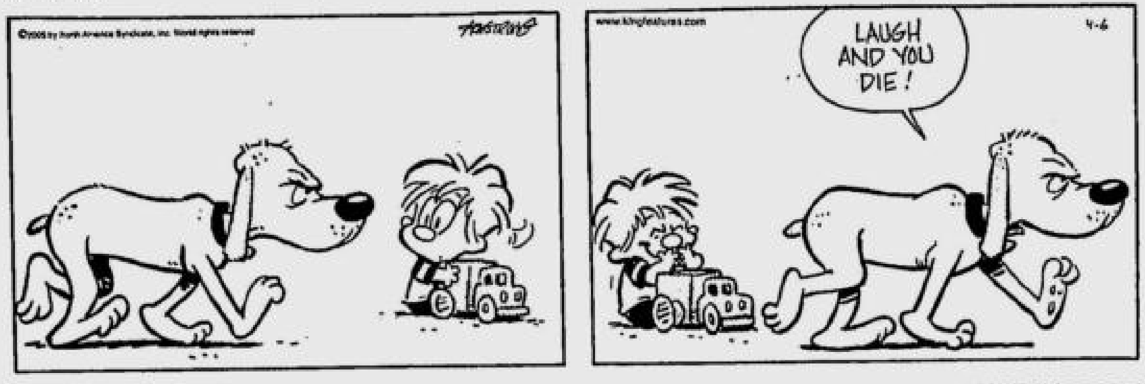
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DAHIL DAW SA OVERPOPULATION
MAUUBOS ANG ATING MGA RESOURCES!
OO...
KUNG WALANG DISCOVERY NG BAGONG RESOURCES, SUBSTITUTION, RECYCLING AND IMPROVED EFFICIENCY
4-6-05

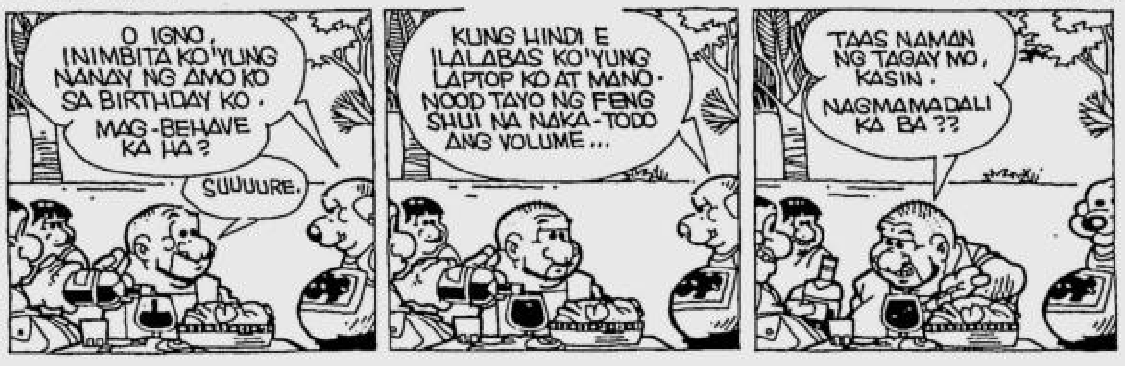
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


www.kingfeatures.com
4-6
LAUGH AND YOU DIE!

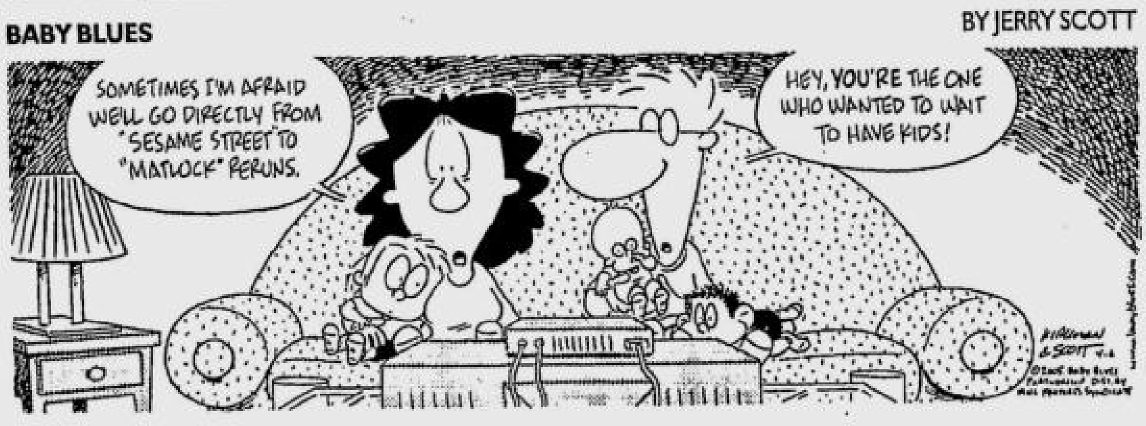
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O IGNO, INIMBITA KO 'YUNG NANAY NG AMO KO SA BIRTHDAY KO. MAG-BEHAVE KA HA?
SUUUURE.
KUNG HINDI E ILALABAS KO 'YUNG LAPTOP KO AT MANO-NOOD TAYO NG FENG SHUI NA NAKA-TODO ANG VOLUME...
TAAS NAMAN NG TAGAY MO, KASIN. NAGMAMADALI KA BA??

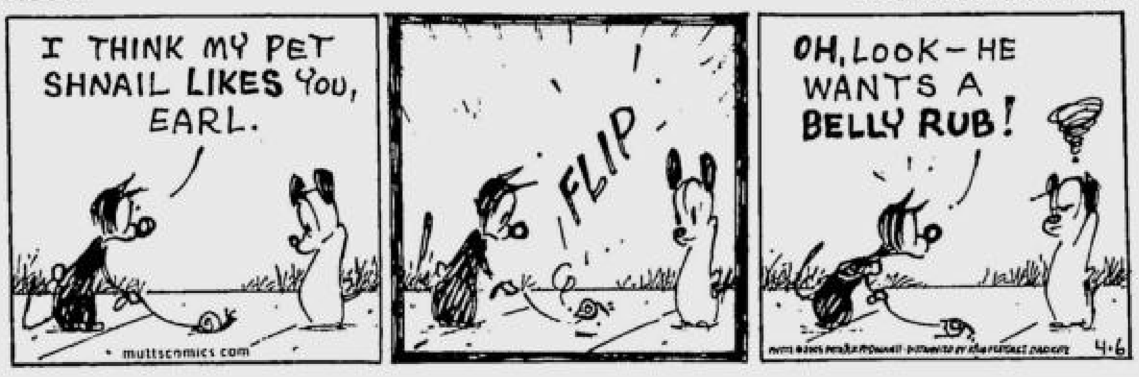
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SOMETIMES I'M AFRAID WE'LL GO DIRECTLY FROM "SESAME STREET" TO "MATLOCK" RERUNS.
HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED TO WAIT TO HAVE KIDS!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

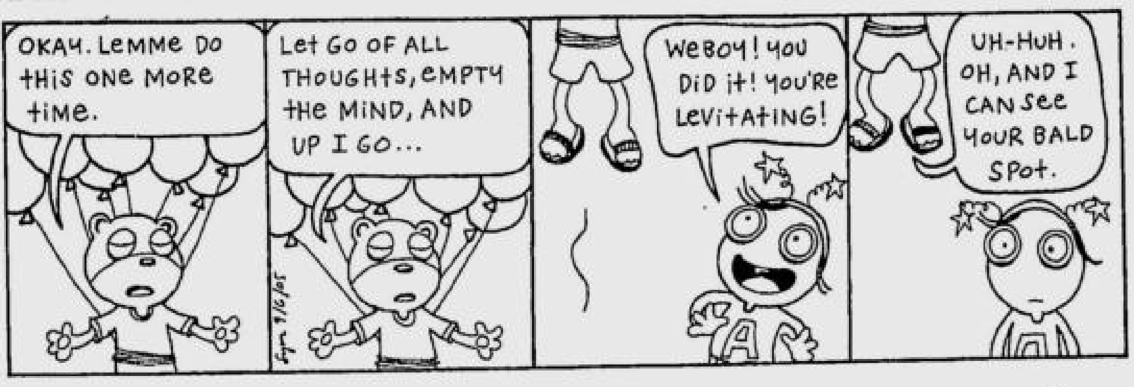
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I THINK MY PET SHNAIL LIKES YOU, EARL.
FLIP
OH, LOOK – HE WANTS A BELLY RUB!
muttscomics.com
4-6

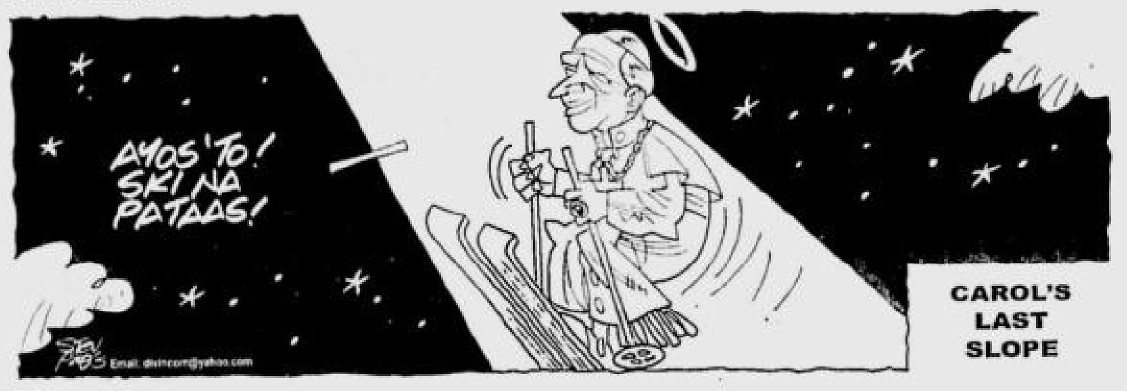
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


OKAY. LEMME DO THIS ONE MORE TIME.
LET GO OF ALL THOUGHTS, EMPTY THE MIND, AND UP I GO...
WEBOY! YOU DID IT! YOU'RE LEVITATING!
UH-HUH. OH, AND I CAN SEE YOUR BALD SPOT.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


AYOS 'TO! SKI NA PATAAS!
CAROL'S LAST SLOPE
STEV PABS
Email: divincom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're curious; you enjoy experimentation. You are always innovative, peering and probing into new aspects of life. You like to correct things that are wrong. You see better ways of doing things—in part, because you see the big picture. This year might be one of the best years of your life! Dream big.
Birthdate of: Candace Cameron, actress; Merle Haggard, country singer; John Ratzenberger, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're successful dealing with others today because you're more tuned in to where they're coming from. It's almost as if you can hear their thoughts (kind of spooky).

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Time spent alone today will be time well-spent. You'll have a chance to get in touch with your inner feelings. In turn, this will help you understand yourself better. (Always a good thing.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your idealism is aroused today! You want to make the world a better place, and you want to do this by organizing others or working with groups.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): People admire you today. They see that you're compassionate and caring. These are noble qualities that certainly trigger respect in others. People know that you care.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Discussions about philosophy, religion and politics are quite idealistic today. Basically, you're talking about what you wish would be the reality around you instead of what is.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is an excellent day to share something with someone or to divide something. You want all parties to be treated fairly right now—including you!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ability to deal with others is excellent today. Not only do you feel sympathetic and kind toward people, but you also feel creative and fun-loving! Yay!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Trust your gut instincts today. You seem to be tuned in to a level that is below the radar. You sense what others want. You know how to please them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your creative skills are excellent today! In addition, your ability to deal with children and young people is also very tuned-in right now. This is a great day for a vacation. It's also a great day for artistic output.

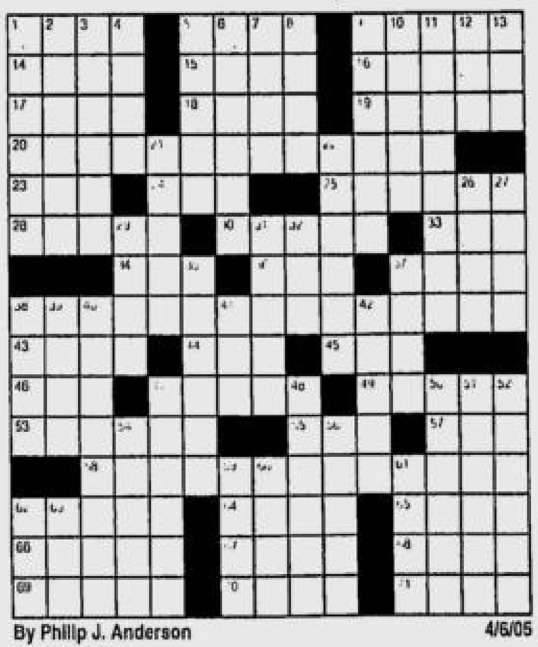
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to buy gorgeous things for your home or for family members today. You feel generous, even extravagant. Plus, your appreciation for beauty is heightened.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Discussions with siblings and relatives go very well today. There's a mutual give-and-take to conversation. You sense what others want.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Business, commerce and shopping are extremely favored right now. Since you like to buy shoes, perhaps this could be one of the things you might want to check out? You love beautiful things today!

GASFAR
fuel saving tips
CONSIDER FUEL EFFICIENCY WHEN BUYING A CAR
New cars come in all shapes and sizes, but it is possible to pick a new car that can greatly reduce your fuel bill and fuel emission.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
4/6/05

ACROSS
1 Spill the beans
5 Aleutian island
9 Of the Vatican
14 Grace ending
15 "I Remember Mama" role
16 Pope's fanon
17 Verne's skipper
18 "Dies __"
19 State gambling
20 Bright citation
23 "Little Red Book" compiler Biao
24 Maiden name indication
25 Audio system
28 Made comfortable
30 One-tenth donation
33 FDR's Blue Eagle
34 Mrs. in Madrid
36 NYSE watchdog
37 NaCl
38 Bright models
43 Kent's girlfriend
44 Feather stickum?
45 Actress Peeples
46 Abel's partner?
47 Modify
49 Verbalize
53 Process for sorting the injured
55 12/24 or 12/31
57 Winery cask
58 Bright booboos
62 Shoe grip
64 Farmland
65 Pro's opponent
66 Poet Alighieri
67 SS Alex Rodriguez
68 Audacity
69 Locales
70 Philosopher Immanuel
71 Out of the wind

DOWN
1 Confused jumble
2 Pilot Earhart
3 Clunky cars
4 Have memorized
5 Fashionable shape
6 Desired goal
7 Links hazard
8 Exploitive fellow
9 Well-mannered
10 Woke up
11 Fatherly
12 PC key
13 Zodiac lion
21 Arboreal lemur
22 Container for cinders
26 __ Stanley Gardner
27 Trigger treats
29 Slave of the past
31 Grenoble river
32 John Ritter's dad
35 Buck's horn
37 Tiff
38 Blind strip
39 Filament
40 Impoverished
41 Hood's gun
42 Penny pincher
47 Some marbles
48 Zone
50 Unmelodious
51 Hard-shelled reptile
52 Store, as fodder
54 Having wings
56 South African grassland
59 Writer Dinesen
60 Writer Lofts
61 Hindu music form
62 LPs' replacements
63 Chou En-__

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	F	F	■	P	L	A	T	E	■	S	E	G	O
O	L	A	V	■	L	I	M	I	T	■	U	S	E	D
S	T	R	I	K	E	U	P	T	H	E	B	A	N	D
T	O	M	T	I	T	■	S	H	E	L	T	I	E	S
■	■	■	A	S	H	Y	■	E	L	A	L	■	■	■
L	A	Y	■	S	O	A	P	■	S	N	E	E	R	S
O	R	E	■	E	R	R	E	D	■	■	S	T	E	T
C	O	M	E	D	A	N	C	E	W	I	T	H	M	E
A	M	E	X	■	■	S	A	L	O	N	■	Y	A	P
L	A	N	C	E	S	■	N	E	O	N	■	L	P	S
■	■	■	L	A	M	P	■	S	L	I	P	■	■	■
A	V	I	A	R	I	S	T	■	I	N	A	J	A	M
B	E	G	I	N	T	H	E	B	E	G	U	I	N	E
E	D	O	M	■	H	A	T	E	S	■	S	L	O	T
T	A	R	S	■	S	W	E	E	T	■	E	T	N	A

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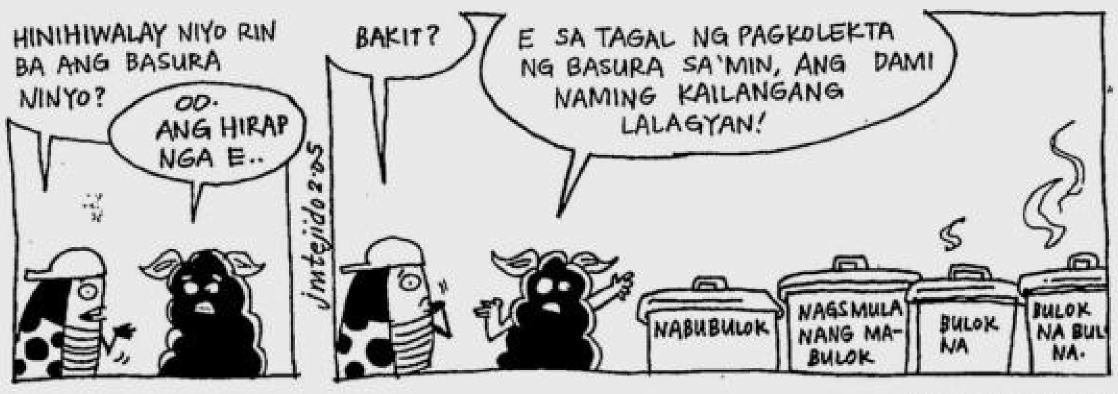
4/6/05

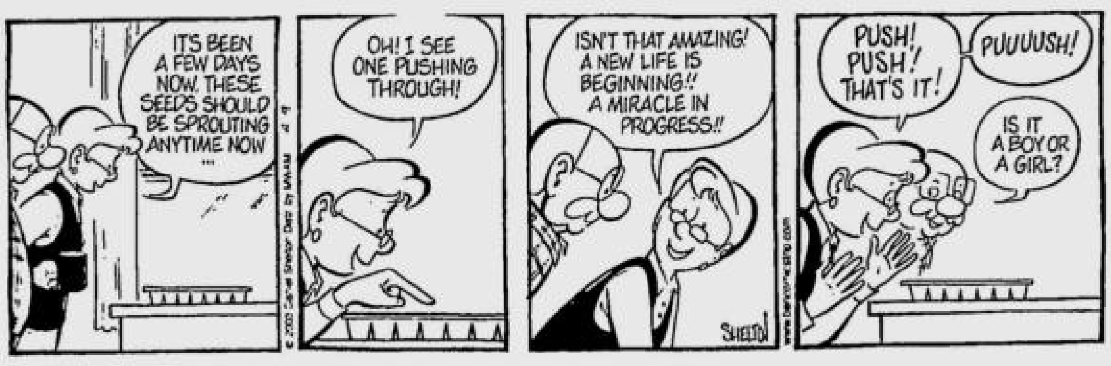
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


HINIHIWALAY NIYO RIN BA ANG BASURA NINYO?
OO. ANG HIRAP NGA E..
jmtejido 2-05
BAKIT?
E SA TAGAL NG PAGKOLEKTA NG BASURA SA'MIN, ANG DAMI NAMING KAILANGANG LALAGYAN!
NABUBULOK
NAGSMULA NANG MA-BULOK
BULOK NA
BULOK NA BUL NA.

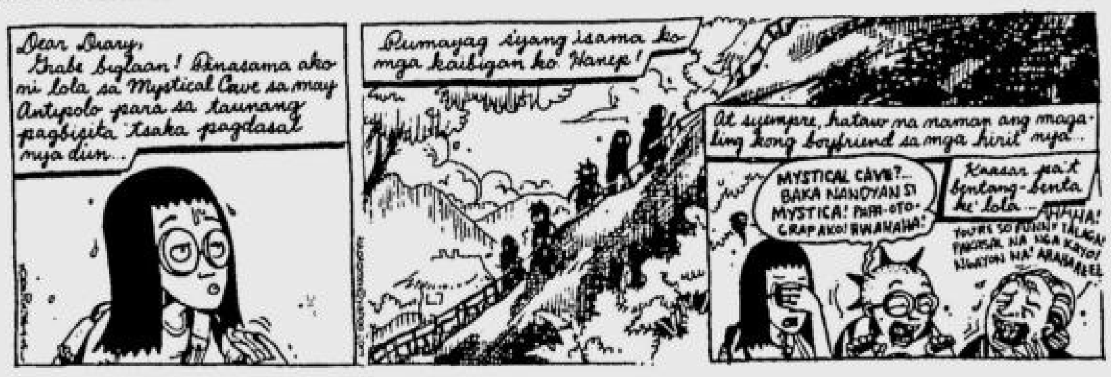
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S BEEN A FEW DAYS NOW. THESE SEEDS SHOULD BE SPROUTING ANYTIME NOW ...
OH! I SEE ONE PUSHING THROUGH!
ISN'T THAT AMAZING! A NEW LIFE IS BEGINNING!! A MIRACLE IN PROGRESS!!
PUSH! PUSH! THAT'S IT!
PUUUUSH!
IS IT A BOY OR A GIRL?
SHELTON

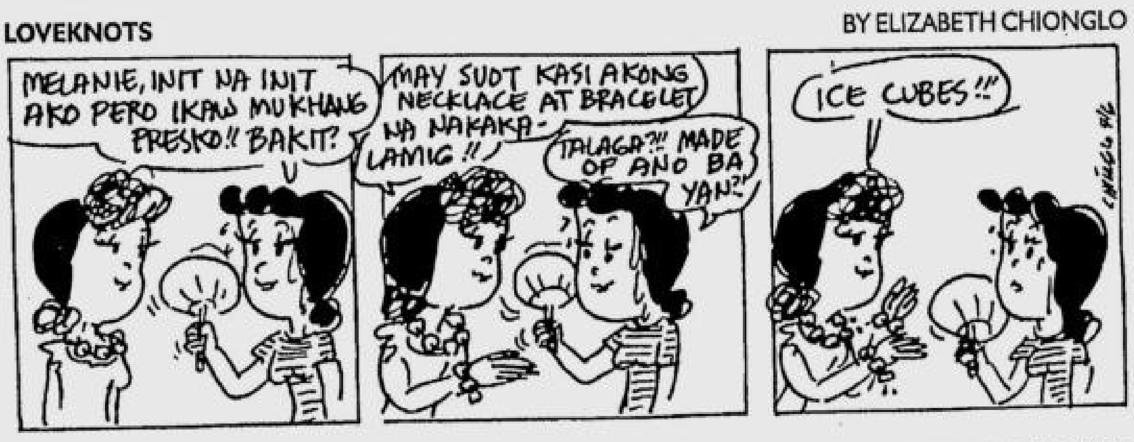
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


Dear Diary, Grabe biglaan! Sinasama ako ni lola sa Mystical Cave sa may Antipolo para sa taunang pagbisita tsaka pagdasal nya dun...
Pumayag siyang isama ko mga kaibigan ko. Hanep!
At syempre, hataw na naman ang magaling kong boyfriend sa mga hirit nya...
MYSTICAL CAVE?... BAKA NANDYAN SI MYSTICA! PAPA-OTO-GRAP AKO! BWAHAHA!
Kaasar pa't bentang-benta ke lola...
AHHA! YOU'RE SO FUNNY TALAGA! PAGSISA NA NGA KAYO NGAYON NA! AHAHAREEE

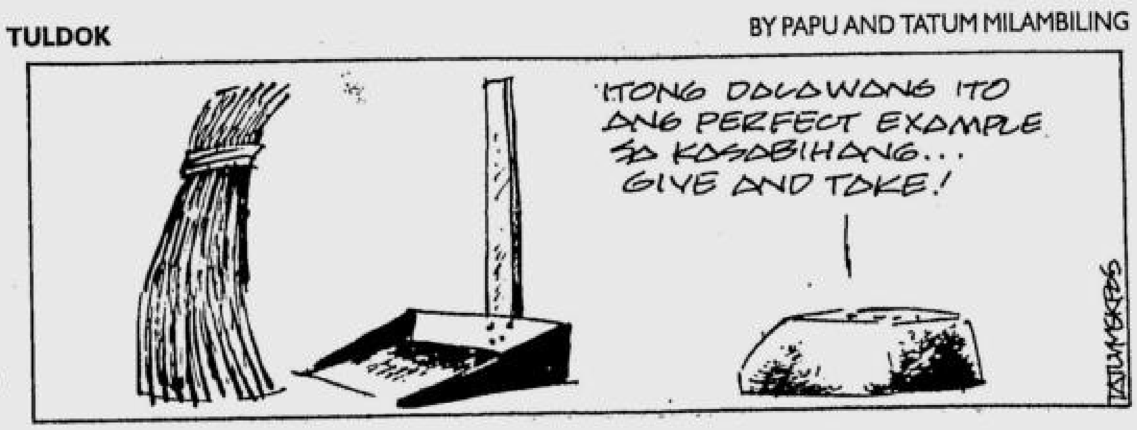
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MELANIE, INIT NA INIT AKO PERO IKAW MUKHANG PRESKO!! BAKIT?
MAY SUOT KASI AKONG NECKLACE AT BRACELET NA NAKAKA-LAMIG!!
TALAGA?!! MADE OF ANO BA YAN?!
ICE CUBES!!"
CHIONGLO 4/6

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ITONG DOLOWONG ITO ANG PERFECT EXAMPLE SA KASABIHANG... GIVE AND TAKE!
TATUM & PAPU

ORANGE JUICE. Beat the heat by faking the layers.

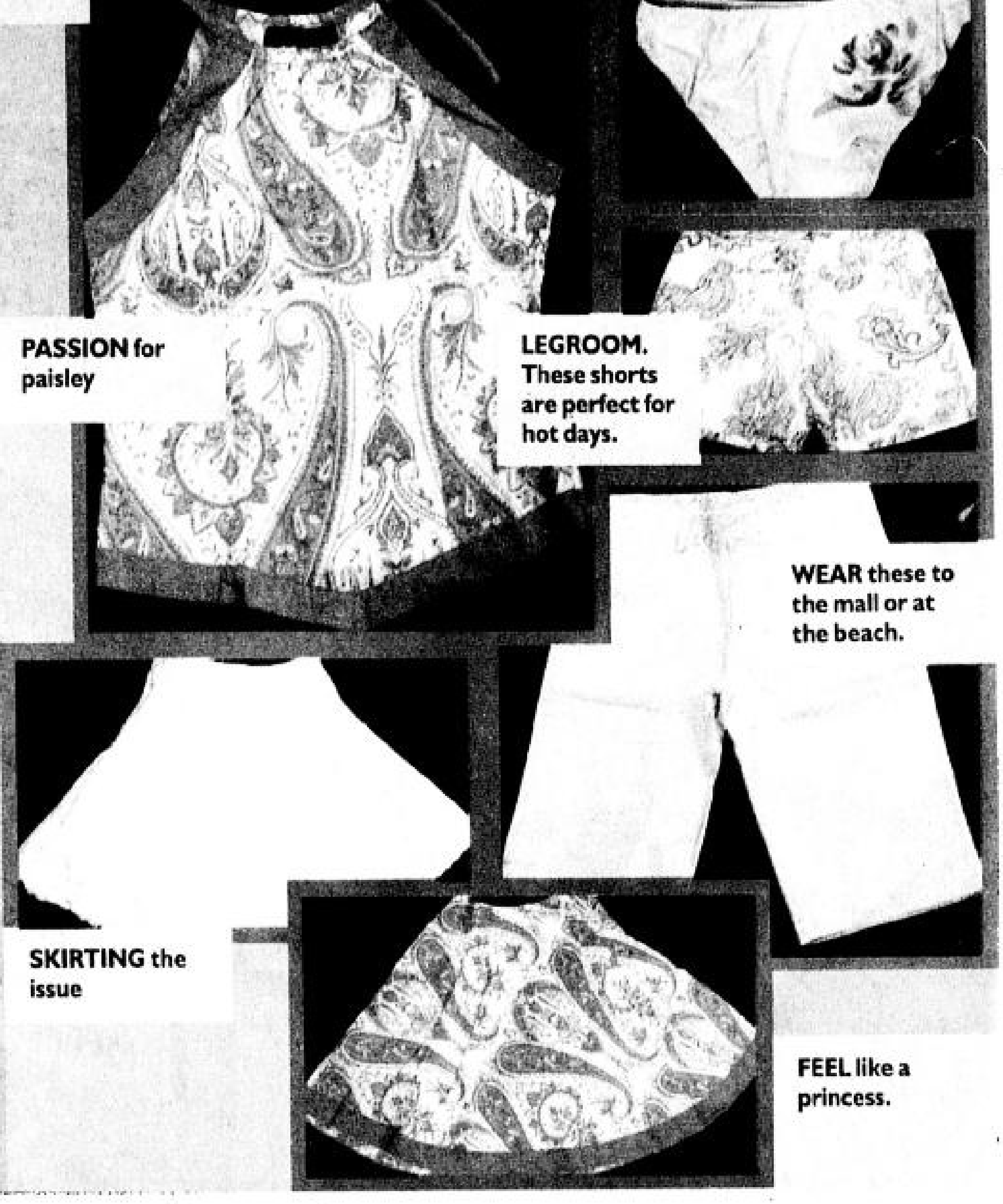
SASSY STRIPES. Show off those shoulders.

BIKINI beauty

COLOR of the year. Feel pretty in green.

FLORAL explosion

TANKINI for the modest



PASSION for paisley

LEGROOM. These shorts are perfect for hot days.

WEAR these to the mall or at the beach.

SKIRTING the issue

FEEL like a princess.

THE 2BU! FASHION FREAKS

Sizzling summer sensations

Power to the woman

PLAINS & Prints has launched its new campaign—"I complete me." It is their way of paying tribute to empowered women who realize love and accept themselves as they are. The campaign focuses on women's capacity to take risks and handle pain and whose constant strength is an inspiration to others around them.

If you want to win gift packs or gift certificates worth P5,000 from Plains & Prints, answer this question: "What makes your summer complete?"

E-mail your answers to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age and contact information.

Entries must be submitted by April 30.

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

THESE past years, the number of local boutiques in the country has grown, in the quest to quench the never-ending thirst of fashion fans.

These boutiques are must-stops for us at the mall, offering wardrobe additions that are fresh, fun and affordable.

Last week, the 2bU! Fashion Freaks raided Plains & Prints' summer collection for finds that would bring a splash of color to your summer experience.

These great pieces, which feature sexy cuts and pretty prints, can make you feel like a beach goddess, whether you're at the beach or not.

If you want the Fashion Freaks to visit your stores or check out your wares, e-mail us at thefashionfreaks@yahoo.com.

Is your skin ready for summer?

By Pam Pastor

SHU UEMURA, one of 2bU!'s favorite makeup and skincare brands, has put together a great summer essentials kit for people hitting the road and the beach this summer.

The Limited Edition set contains Shu Uemura Star products at half the retail value.

Every kit includes:

Shu Uemura's all-time best-selling product—50 ml High Performance Balancing Cleansing Oil Light. This product is multipurpose, working as a makeup remover, cleanser and skin softener. It's a great way to remove all the sweat and grime that can clog your pores.

Total Defender SPF25+++, Shu Uemura's purple-toned, powder-based sunblock is unique, allowing your skin to absorb it immediately without leaving a white finish on your skin. Your skin can stay smooth and protected from UVA and UVB rays all day without looking greasy.

Made from pure water harvested 300 m under the sea, Depsea Water (50 ml) hydrates the skin and gives you an instant boost. For an instant dose of relaxation, choose the Lavender one. If you want to be energized, Mint is the right choice.

Just because you're away from home doesn't mean you have to forget about your beauty routine. Complete it with Depsea Therapy Moisture Recovery Equiwater and Emulsion Miniatures, samples of their refreshing toner and light moisturizer.

This beauty loot comes in a limited edition nylon cosmetic travel pouch.

The total value is P5,750 but you can avail of the Shu Uemura Summer Essentials Kit for P2,995..

The Shu Uemura Summer Essentials Kit is available at Shu Uemura counters at Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza Mall.

INCLUDE this kit in your packing list.

RUDY ESPERAS

Arm yourself with Shu Uemura's summer essentials kit

In fairness

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

MANY people think that purchasing whitening products during the summer is ridiculous, but it isn't as impractical as it seems.

Whitening products have come a long way from the creams and lotions offered on the market a few years ago—they no longer change the skin to a pasty, fake shade. Instead, the newer products lighten and brighten your skin instead of bleaching it unnaturally.

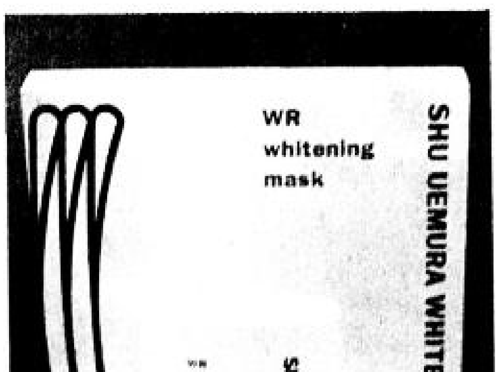
Shu Uemura recently introduced new products to its current White Recovery line: whitening masks, toner and eye cream. The products are perfect for people who want to correct their blotchy tans without sacrificing their golden color—no harsh bleaching here, definitely.

The mask reminds of the title character in "The Phantom of the Opera," (in fact, my siblings laughed out loud when they saw me with it), but the refreshing feeling it provides makes up for any ribbing you may get from anyone. My complexion was visibly brighter upon removing the mask, but it will take 2-3 masks for more permanent results. The masks come in a box of six.

The Enriched White Recovery toner could also help speed up the whitening process without turning your skin unnaturally pale. It is best applied at night, but if you insist on applying it in the morning as well, do not forget to wear sunscreen to prevent burning your skin (Try the Total Defender SPF 25+++).

Last in the line is the White Recovery eye cream, which promises to lighten dark undereye circles and reduce puffiness.

The line is available at Shu Uemura in Rustan's Glorietta and Shangri-La.



SHU Uemura's White Recovery line

RAFFY LERMA

Maintaining healthy hair

From page E1

slightest sign of sweat—after all, it isn't a pleasant sight to have gel dripping on your temples. But many products aren't heat-resistant or are simply too heavy. Look for lightweight hair products that don't sacrifice texture for quality.

Try Bed Head Hard Head, a fast-drying gel that stays put—you can even use it to Mohawk eight-inch long strands, if you care to try. But if you're not into outrageous hairdos, Osis Stick Up, a hard wax stick great for styling short hair styles, might be the thing for you. Male friends and relatives swear by it. It can supposedly withstand the forces of sun and saltwater. Girls who have difficulty fighting the frizz may want to get Control Freak serum, a sparkly green concoction that promises to smooth out wayward strands of hair (and, as with all Bed Head products, it smells like candy.)

Call 7268507-8 for the Schwarzkopf/Osis salon nearest you. Tigi Bed Head and Davines are available at leading salons nationwide.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

2BU! PROMO

Win 'American Idol' goodies!

CAN you believe Anwar Robinson was in the bottom two? We couldn't! But we're glad he's back for another week. Go, Anwar, go!

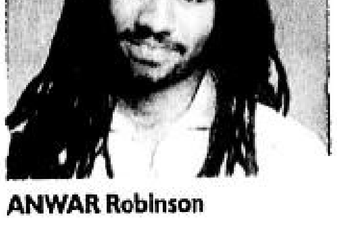
This week we have nine more aspiring idols to watch.

To add even more fun to this season's American Idols, 2bU! and Star World have been giving away exclusive "American Idol" premium items.

E-mail your answers to the following questions to americanidol_on_starworld@yahoo.com. The first five people who will send correct answers will win.

Week of April 4, 2005

1. Who was the most recent semi-finalist to be eliminated in the competition?
2. What is the one vocal quality that judge Randy Jackson always looks for?
3. Which contestant named her dance step "The Bobo?"
4. Which former contestant recently appeared on "The Surreal Life"?
5. Who finished second in "American Idol's" season three?



ANWAR Robinson

Catch "American Idol" on Star World, with direct off satellite telecasts on Wednesday and Thursday at 4 p.m. and primetime replays at 8 p.m.

Winners for Week of March 28:

1. Hans Pura
2. Kezelyn Robles
3. Michael Leopold Tan
4. Therese Marie Surla
5. John Henry Paguirigan

Winners will be notified on how to claim their prizes.

Join the 2bU! Summer Camp

TWENTY school papers. Sixty young journalists. Three days of fun.

Sixty young journalists from 20 different school publications will be invited to join the 2bU! Summer Camp. If you want you and other staffers of your school paper to join in on the fun, send us copies of the best issues of your school paper or magazine. We guarantee three days of excitement and education, with excellent speakers, workshops and group activities. Participants will also get the chance to become 2bU! Editors for a Week.

Send your entries to the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Address them to Hazel Soriaga.

Model go-see

Over 100 people packed the INQUIRER lobby for last Sunday's go-see. We made some great discoveries. Watch out for our new models in the coming fashion shoots.

Winners of the Valentine promo

You guys flooded us with entries for the 2bU! Valentine Blowout and we're still neck-deep in them. Winners will be announced soon. We will print our favorite entries in a future issue.

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